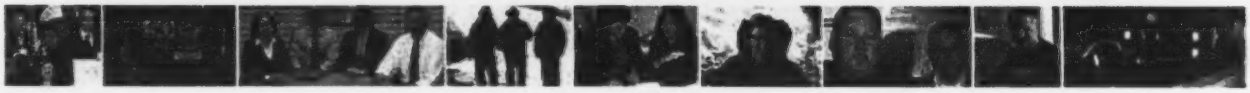
RoadRunner



BRITISH COLUMBIA
The Best Place on Earth

Ministry of Transportation **Staff Newsletter** March 2008

Premier's Awards 2007-08

The Ministry of Transportation's efforts received outstanding recognition this year at the Premier's Innovation and Excellence Awards, held in three regions and Victoria. The awards program was launched in 2004 to showcase the best examples of innovation and excellence, strengthen pride and identity among employees internally and help build the public service's external reputation.

DriveBC, Provincial Winner, Service Excellence

(photo top)

The ministry's DriveBC Team was recognized for excellence in providing current and accessible information to highway users across B.C. *Back row:* Del Mecham, Jack Bennetto, Premier Gordon Campbell, Sandra Carroll, Cameron Gray and Rick Stangeland. *Front Row:* Ian Donaldson, Gord Smith, Trish Sterloff, Nancy McLeod, Robin Windels and Vince Blankenborg.

Dave Duncan and Kevin Richter, Interior Region Silver Winners

(photo bottom)

Climate Action Program Director Dave Duncan and Southern Interior Regional Director Kevin Richter, pictured here with Premier Gordon Campbell (centre) brought together the Lytton First Nation, the highway contractor and union negotiators to mitigate and end a three-month long ferry service disruption.

continued on page 3...

Editor's Note

"We all have dreams. But in order to make dreams come into reality, it takes an awful lot of determination, dedication, self-discipline and effort."

– Jessie Owens, *four time gold medalist, 1936 Olympics*

The Olympics are less than two years away now, and signs of this big event are starting to appear. In this issue you'll see photos of the new roads for the Nordic Centre, snaps of the Callaghan Valley, and breathtaking shots of ski jumping events at the new facilities. There are also our three ministry staff who will be working in Beijing to showcase British Columbia and the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

This issue of Road Runner shows that our ministry has employees who are our own version of Olympic athletes. There are graduates from challenging learning programs, Premier's Award winners, and CVSE staff who contribute their deep commitment and fullest efforts to keeping B.C.'s roads safe.

There are also employees who have demonstrated feats of great physical prowess, emotional strength or generosity of heart. They include Steve Portman who spent Christmas Eve and Christmas Day searching for missing snowmobilers, Rob Blackburn who is undergoing chemotherapy for cancer, and numerous others who are raising funds for community organizations such as Big Brothers and Big Sisters, the Heart and Stroke Foundation and the Multiple Sclerosis Society.

And of course, there are many unsung heroes among us, who work with daily dedication and focus.

You are all champions!

Nancy McLeod, Editor

Photo by Jim Hegan

RoadRunner Contents, March 2008

Premier's Awards 2007-08 page 1
Editor's Note 2
Professional Development and Dinner Gala
50th Anniversary Celebration for CVSE 4
Employee Advisory Forum
WorkLife BC Offers Advice on Recruiting, Work Culture 7
EAF Discusses Public Service Values, Action Plans 7
EPDP a Dialogue with a Common Language 8
Tips for Getting Ready to Retire 8
2008 Work Environment Survey to Launch in April – Who Will Bring Home the Trophy? 10
Connections Forum Shares Transportation Vision 10
Anatomy of an Avalanche – Avalanche Control in Challenging Times 11
Snowy Skeena Ride Along 12
Steve Portman – Public Servant Extraordinaire 13
CVSE SCR Teams Seek Input on Provincial Tour 14
Restoring Habitat along the Cowichan River, Vancouver Island 15
Getting There Green
Greening Our Borders a Winning Idea 17
Bob Penner Celebrates his Green Ideas Shine Leader Award 18
Ministry Safety Plan – A Valuable and Renewable Resource 19
A Landmark Event 19
Alex Fraser Bridge Joints Replaced 20
Whistler Nordic Centre Access Roads 21
Come Ride with Us – The Transit Branch 23
South Coast Region Celebrates National Engineering and Geoscience Week 24
New Dynamic Message Signs on the Coquihalla and Trans Canada Highways 24
Bigger Than You Think! – Wildlife in British Columbia 25
Taking the "What the heck is it?" Out of Roadkill Identification 26
Giant Spider Takes Over Highway 7 26
Emergency Response Training an Eye Opener 27
Field Services – War Room 2008! 27
Cleaning Up at the Prince George South Scale 28
Oooops! 29
See Employees @ Work 29
Spot the Violation 29
Team Keeps "Knowledgeable Owner" Torch Lit 30
Hats Off To Our Graduates 30
Bound for Beijing 31
Rob Blackburn Gets a Bike Minus Sympathy 32
Photography From an Olympic View 33
Community Events!
The Heart and Stroke Big Bike Ride Pennies for a Great Cause 35
Highway Rollers Bowl Strikes for Tykes Super Cities Walk for MS 36
2008 Gov't/Hydro/Telus Funspiel 37
Kamloops Highway Two-Ender Returns with Trophies and Fun 38
MoT Who's Who 39
On The Road Again
Wildlife Along the Liard Highway Sunny and Cloudy Days 40
You never know what you'll see
Loads Come in All Sizes and Shapes 41
Truck Gone Sideways 42
Fort George District Staff On the Move 43
Onto New Vistas
Colleagues Bid Dan Saari a Fond Farewell 44
Party Planned for "Super Dave" LaBar's Retirement 44
Doreen Poirier Retires After Two Decades 45
Harold Boyden Applied No-Nonsense Approach 46
Nick Vandermolen Always Willing to Help 46
After 34.5 Years, Rob Howat Moves On 47
Steve Uyesugi's First Smithers Home Became Site of MoT Office 47
Staff Roundup 49
In Memoriam 50

The RoadRunner is an employee newsletter, published six times a year. We welcome your story submissions. Email your article as a word document (350 words max) and your photographs as jpegs to: RoadRunner@gov.bc.ca.

In the email for your story, please attach the text as a word document and attach the graphics (photos, charts, etc) as seperate jepgs or pdf files. Please DO NOT embed graphics in the article – this compromises reproduction quality and the images may not be useable by our graphic artist.

You can check out the **Employee Advisory Forum** website for regular updates: http://gww.th.gov.bc.ca/EAF/home_intra.asp

For @Work – the **Public Service Community** Website, visit: https://gww.gov.bc.ca/?email=yes

Check out the **MoT Online Store** at: http://gww.th.gov.bc.ca/gwwhr/content/store/onlinestore.pdf

Premier's Awards 2007-08 *continued from front cover*

Dirk Nyland, Provincial Winner, Cross-Government Integration

Chief Engineer Dirk Nyland (back row, second from left) was recognized for his work as a flood preparation and response leader with the multi-ministry Central Coordination Group. In anticipation of last year's flood forecasts, the group increased safety in 35 communities by undertaking urgent mitigation projects worth $33 million.

Garth Stewart, Lower Mainland Region Silver Winner

Senior Manager, First Nations Policy Garth Stewart (back row, far left) was recognized for his contribution as part of the Sea-to-Sky Working Group. The inter-agency group ensures balanced operational decisions and activities along the Sea-to-Sky corridor for land use, shared legacies and venues for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games.

Angela Buckingham, Provincial Finalist, Leadership

Chief Environmental Officer Angela Buckingham was chosen as a finalist for her work on Gateway and Sea-to-Sky Highway, addressing project needs, environmental needs and community interests. Angela is pictured here with Jessica MacDonald, Deputy Minister to the Premier. ♦

PREMIER'S AWARDS
PROMOTING INNOVATION AND EXCELLENCE

Professional Development and Dinner Gala Mark 50th Anniversary Celebration for CVSE

Submitted by Gloria Valle

At a special dinner celebration held in Vancouver on March 3, Deputy Minister John Dyble paid tribute to the staff of the Commercial Vehicle Safety and Enforcement Branch. This is the 50th anniversary of CVSE and its forerunner organizations; it was back in 1958 that the provincial government created the Department of Commercial Transport, responsible for monitoring the safety of commercial vehicles on B.C. roads.

In his speech, John Dyble reached back to British Columbia's earliest days as a Crown colony saying, "Early on, road development was done in a patchwork fashion. If you were a farmer, you created a road and often allowed others to use it. There was no real effort to think about roads and how they should be planned or cared for."

"Today, we are responsible for the safety of over 600,000 commercial vehicles. Our people are vital to achieving our objectives, and CVSE has played a direct role in our success."

John Dyble noted that CVSE employees contribute to their communities and their province through personal activities as well as professional duties. In sporting events, industry competitions, local charity drives and through the Provincial Employees' Community Services Fund, CVSE staffers exemplify pride and caring, the deputy minister said.

Deputy Minister John Dyble with Administrative Supervisor Karen Brown and Clerk Christine Loder.

Rob Richardson, Area Vehicle Inspector from Nelson, with Deputy Minister John Dyble.

The dinner event came in the middle of a two-day series of panel discussions and information sessions for Commercial Vehicle Safety and Enforcement staff.

Highways ADM Mike Proudfoot, Steve Haywood, CVSE Manager Lower Mainland/Fraser Valley, and Jack Bennetto, Rocky Mountain District Manager.

The issues addressed on the first day included educational opportunities for staff, their working environment, safety on the job and finding innovative ways of carrying out work-related duties. The second day featured presentations on several initiatives that CVSE is involved in and that will roll out more widely in the coming months.

The feedback the ministry received from participants at the two-day gathering was very positive.

"An excellent opportunity to meet with co-workers from around the province, exchange information and knowledge and share experiences," said one person in a comment sheet. Another added: "Receiving unfiltered information directly from the speakers was useful." And someone else remarked, "I'm looking forward to this becoming an annual CVSE event."

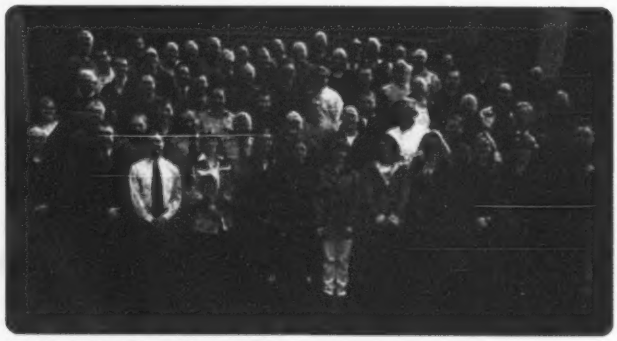
While it's too soon to say when events might happen in the future, the March 3 dinner celebration was attended by about 200 people, including a number of staff who have been with CVSE through most of those 50 years. To mark the special occasion, all CVSE staff were given sterling silver commemorative pins and crystal keepsakes, each bearing a stylized emblem that combines the historical and current crests of the branch. The emblem was designed by Gordon Bell, one of CVSE's portable weigh scale inspectors.

continued on page 5 and 6...

50th Anniversary Celebration for CVSE *continued from page 4*

The anniversary keepsake *(pictured above)* was given to all CVSE employees.

Headquarters CVSE employees.



Southern Interior Region CVSE.

Northern Region CVSE.

South Coast Region CVSE.

50 Years of CVSE: A Legacy of Change

Submitted by Gloria Valle

The ministry's Commercial Vehicle Safety and Enforcement Branch celebrated its 50th anniversary in February. This team of dedicated safety professionals, recognized across the country for their knowledge, commitment and diligence, are part of a proud tradition – forged over five decades – that continues today.

Fifty years ago, when the Department of Commercial Transport was formed, there were about 100,000 commercial vehicles using B.C.'s roads. Or at least that's how many were registered. It was, after all, early days in the world of commercial vehicle regulation.

Today, CVSE is responsible for monitoring the safety of more than 600,000 commercial vehicles. That is a phenomenal growth, and the road that CVSE took to get here as an organization is no less amazing. It is a history rich with change and transformation.

continued on page 6...

50 Years of CVSE: A Legacy of Change *continued from page 5*

Here are just some of the milestones in road safety in British Columbia, from the earliest recognition that roads should be managed for the public good, to the creation of CVSE and its various forerunner organizations.

1858: Crown Colony of British Columbia established by proclamation

1862: Commissioner of Lands and Works established, creating authority for developing and managing roads in B.C.

1936: North of Yale, a combined weigh scale/toll-booth is constructed to control the weight of vehicles using the Fraser Canyon and to collect tolls from commercial vehicles using the road. The tolls pay for the maintenance of this section of highway. This is the only "BC Scale" until 1948.

1948 - 52: Weigh scale stations are built at Cache Creek, Elk Lake, Duncan, Parksville and Pattullo Bridge. These stations enforce size and weight regulations and provide truck weight data for use by the Department of Highways Design Branch. They are staffed on an intermittent basis by employees of the Highways Department and also operated by the Highways Patrol Branch of the B.C. Provincial Police.

1955: Ministry of Highways is created.

1958: Department of Commercial Transport is formed and becomes responsible for fixed and portable provincial scale facilities. The move combines the Department of Railways, the Commercial Vehicle Section of the Motor Vehicle Branch and the Weigh Scale and Special Permit Section of the Department of Highways. In the first year of operation, 15 weigh scale sites are built and brought into use, and six portable units are set up.

1973: The ministry becomes the Department of Transport and Communications and Highways.

1979: The Department of Commercial Transport was merged with the Motor Vehicle Branch.

1982: Vehicle Inspectors joined Commercial Transport operations, and staff became part of the Ministry of Transportation and Highways

1988: Motor Vehicle Branch is transferred to the new Ministry of Solicitor General

1991: Motor Vehicle Branch is moved again to the Ministry of Attorney General

1993: Ministry of Transportation and Highways assumes responsibility for Motor Vehicle Branch

1997: Responsibility for Commercial Transport operations is moved to the Insurance Corporation of B.C.

2003: Commercial Vehicle Safety and Enforcement is again transferred to be part of the Ministry of Transportation, while Driver Services remain an ICBC responsibility

CVSE's name and which ministry or department it reports to are not the only things that have changed in the field in 50 years. What the branch calls its staff and what they wear on their uniforms has also been an evolutionary process.

For example, for more than a decade starting in 1978, B.C.'s road safety professionals were called "weighmasters." Those titles changed to the more appropriate "inspector" in 1989.

In 1981, the badge on weighmasters' hats identified them as being with the Commercial Transport Division. From 1989 to 1992, inspectors' uniforms carried only the branch name – Motor Vehicle Branch – and not the ministry name. In 1992, another decision was made to identify staff by their title – Motor Vehicle Inspector – rather than who they worked for.

Finally, in 2005, another name change occurred, establishing the Commercial Vehicle Safety and Enforcement Branch, and a new shoulder patch was issued bearing the words "Peace Officer."

Across 50 years, the organization and the job titles have changed an incredible number of times. But the professionalism of CVSE's staff has never wavered, and the people of British Columbia are safer for it. There is a slogan in the Commercial Vehicle Safety and Enforcement Branch: "Proud to be CVSE." And so they should be. The Ministry of Transportation is honoured to have this team of road safety experts in its ranks, and everyone in the ministry congratulates CVSE on 50 great years of service. ♦

WorkLife BC Offers Advice on Recruiting, Work Culture

Submitted by Debbie O'Brien, Team Leader of Team Balancing Act (Health/Workload); District Development Technician

On Feb.1, four members of the Employee Advisory Forum's Health/Workload/Worklife Balance Team (Team Balancing Act) attended the 2008 Worklife BC Forum in Vancouver. Don Ramsay, Jaswinder Mann, Sandra Jackman and I had no idea how informative and energizing this session would be when we signed up in January, but we all agreed that it was well worth every minute we spent in that room. Linda Reid, Minister of State for Child Care, Ministry of Children and Family Development, is the minister responsible for the WorkLife BC Advisory Committee, and she delivered the opening remarks to start the day. The forum was emceed by CBC TV's Gloria Macarenko, and we listened to a number of energetic, enthusiastic speakers over the course of the day. The highlighted topics for me were Secrets to Building an Awesome Workplace Culture and Recruiting the Facebook Generation. The four of us came back with some excellent information and recommendations to bring forward to our Employee Advisory Forum. ♦

I would highly recommend attending this session. For more information please visit the WorkLife BC website at: **www.worklifebc.ca.**

EAF Discusses Public Service Values, Action Plans

The Employee Advisory Forum met Jan. 22, in Victoria and was pleased to have Deputy Minister John Dyble, Partnerships ADM Frank Blasetti and Highways ADM Mike Proudfoot attend at various times during the day. These members of the Executive heard the latest from the forum, and provided their perspectives on the forum's role, the ministry's direction and their own work.

John participated in a thought-provoking exercise, facilitated by Walk the Talk team member Lori Wiedeman. EAF members broke into groups to discuss the values they believed were important to the public service. The findings were then discussed by the larger group, and compiled for submission to a government-wide project to define public service values, as part of the corporate human resources plan.

Later in the day, the five EAF teams defined their 2007-08 plans, and reported back to all members of the EAF.

EAF continues on page 8...

Partnerships ADM Frank Blasetti talks to the group about the work of his department and his background in government. Photo by: Grant Lachmuth

Walk the Talk Team Leader Dawn Braithwaite and team member Renee Mounteney consider some communications ideas. Photo by: Grant Lachmuth

EPDP a Dialogue with a Common Language

Submitted by the EAF Career Development Team

Employee Performance and Development Planning (EPDP) is a cross-government initiative to allow employees, with their supervisors, to set up goals that will assist in their own development and the business goals of the ministry, division or branch.

The EPDP is set up to allow an open dialogue between employee and supervisor where goals are established to have performance measures which act as a common language. EPDP is about two-way conversation!

The cyclic EPDP process allows supervisors and employees to stay focused on development throughout the year and to also be able to celebrate successes. The EPDP process is an annual cycle consisting of three phases:

Gloria Valle and Liz Young of Ministry Protocol and Events exchange information and views as part of the EPDP process.

1. Planning – which is the foundation of the entire process
2. Focussing – keeps the momentum. Ongoing check in with your employee/supervisor
3. Review – evaluated on how you have met your goals. This phase should be as transparent as possible. There should be no surprises due to open dialogue during the focus phase.

How do I get started?

1. Take the online Employee orientation or Supervisor orientation. This narrated 35 minute e-learning module will lead you through the entire EPDP process: **http://gww.bcpublicservice.gov.bc.ca/epdp/resources/learning.htm**
2. Create your EPDP document using our form: **http://gww.th.gov.bc.ca/gwwhr/MoT%20EPDP%20with%20CES.doc**
3. Establish your goals and competencies. The following site will provide a link to each position, providing the competencies required to be successful at your job: **http://gww.th.gov.bc.ca/gwwhr/Content/Home/Competency_Tools/CompletedCompetencyModels.asp**
4. Need more information? The helpful link Tools and Resources **(http://www.bcpublicservice.ca/epdp/#fifth)** provides you with the following:
   - Supervisor's/Employee's Guide
   - Review Matrix overview and summary
   - Giving and receiving feedback summary
   - Frequently asked questions
5. Want additional information?
   - EPDP courses are available through BCPSA

In the past, some may have seen the EPDP process as a one-way conversation that evaluates an employee's performance. Instead, EPDPs are focussed on providing employees with the direction and support they need to excel in their work. ♦

Tips for Getting Ready to Retire

Submitted by Dianne Friend, Business Services

Employee Advisory Forum Member - Career Development and Training

As I am nearing retirement this year, I thought I would share with you some thoughts regarding retirement planning. Here are some tips that I have put to good use in preparation for my own retirement from MoT.

Financial planning for retirement should begin early in life. A financial planner would be the best person for providing up-to-date information. Remember, a financial plan only works if you keep to the plan!

Tips for Retirement continues on page 9...

Tips for Getting Ready to Retire *continued from page 8*

It's a good idea to begin going to the retirement seminars as early as you are able. The seminars are offered every year, and as retirement can take you down many different roads, it's important to be well informed, so you can feel confident that your final decisions are good ones. Life situations can change and one needs to become conversant with all of the retirement choices available.

Speak to employees that have just retired or are about to retire, to gain some understanding from their viewpoint. There is always a different angle to consider depending on your circumstances.

Go onto the websites for Canada Pension Plan (CPP), Old Age Security (OAS) and BC Pension Corporation to get the latest information. On the Pension Corporation website you can do some calculations to get an idea what funds you may expect when you retire. For OAS and CPP you can retrieve your statements and can give them a call for further information. They are very helpful.

Canada Pension Plan http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/isp/pub/factsheets/retire.shtml Go to the A-Z index and select Pensions

Old Age Security http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca

General Information for CPP and OAS

- For service in English: 1 800 277-9914
- For service in French: 1 800 277-9915

BC Pension Corporation http://www.pensionsbc.ca
Request a password and I.D. to get into the estimator

A year or less from when you wish to retire, contact the BC Public Service Agency and/or the Pension Corporation and have a one-on-one meeting with them. The agency can help you understand the different payout options and can assist you in calculating your last work day and confirm your official pension date. Personally, I found the staff very knowledgeable and helpful.

There are a number of forms to fill out and so much information, it's not possible to learn it all in just a couple of days – each of us have different circumstances. Therefore, it's a good idea to go to more than one seminar to help keep you straight on all the options. Forms are available at each of the websites or you can call and they will send you a package about three to four months prior to your retirement.

Suggestions for Life after Retirement

- Have at least two hobbies
- Learn a musical instrument
- Join a bridge club
- Volunteer: http://volunteer.ca/en/volunteercanada
  - Local library
  - Community recreation centre
  - Seniors centre
  - Local elementary schools, SPCA, hospital, etc.
- Travel
- Go to night school
- Learn another language
- Take dancing lessons
- Join an exercise group

Important Note: If you plan on returning to work, be sure to keep the letter you will receive from Canada Pension Corporation to show to your employer that indicates you no longer need to contribute to CPP.

Watch for the addition of centralized retirement information on the Employee Advisory Forum website. **http:/gww.th.gov.bc.ca/eaf/home_intra.asp** ♦

2008 Work Environment Survey to Launch in April – Who Will Bring Home the Trophy?

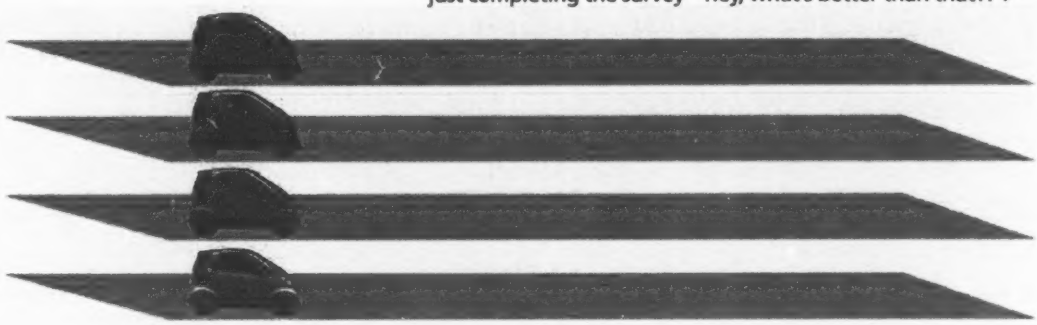
Submitted by Lori Wiedeman, Walk the Talk Team Member (Communications); Manager, HR Planning and Development

Each year, employees across the province complete the annual employee engagement survey and we add a bit of fun by tracking the response rates on the Employee Advisory Forum website. (The Northern Region has won for two years in a row!)

The real reward for all of us is the analysis that is done of the survey results and the actual changes that have been taking place in our organization. From the increased focus on supervisory skills, to reviews of flexible work options and work styles, more and more of our employees are seeing positive changes.

This will be the fifth year that the Ministry of Transportation has been surveying staff on engagement topics, and we encourage you to add your voice so that we can keep doing what works, and work on what isn't quite right yet.

And if you can help bring home the trophy at the same time by just completing the survey – hey, what's better than that?! ♦



Survey Rally – Race to Complete the 2008 Work Environment Survey

Connections Forum Shares Transportation Vision

Submitted by Kate FitzPatrick, Business Coordinator

Sharing the vision for tomorrow's transportation network, the Connections to the Future forum created a sense of pride, community and wonder amongst ministry staff.

Held in Vancouver on Jan. 31, at the Delta Vancouver Airport Hotel, the one-day forum united about 350 MoT employees from across the province, and approximately 50 external stakeholders.

Attendees were treated to presentations from 12 of B.C.'s most influential transportation industry leaders. With senior representatives from CN Railway, Port Authorities, BC Transit, TransLink, BC Trucking Association, Passenger Transportation Branch, Partnerships BC, Canada Line and SNC Lavalin, and BC Roadbuilders, the patches of B.C.'s transportation network were sewn together with common threads of climate change, partnerships and B.C.'s growing economy.

Did you know that CN Railway just purchased a segment of railway in Mexico to accelerate the competition for the fastest freight transportation system in North America? Or that the Port of Prince Rupert has become a humming commercial hub that's shaved two days off sailing time to and from the Asia-Pacific? Or, that resulting from a personal experience where customer service was less than good, Transportation Minister Kevin Falcon was behind the taxi passenger's bill of rights? Under the new trip refusal regulations, taxi drivers will face a $288 fine for refusing to take a fare and drive a passenger to their requested destination.

Uniting new recruits and wise MoT owls, the forum gave everyone the rare opportunity to gather under one roof. Happy exclaims of, "It's great to finally meet you!" could be heard throughout the event, as MoT staff met their regional counterparts, after months (in some cases years) of long-distance correspondence.

Highlighting key transportation projects was only part of this year's *Connections to the Future* forum. Appreciation for employees played an even bigger role, echoing throughout the day. Making its special debut, the *Road to the Future* video showcased the everyday magic MoT staff create in working with B.C.'s challenging terrain, reducing our environmental impact, collaborating with our stakeholders and keeping our highways moving and safe.

Coming away from a day at the *Connections to the Future* forum, it's clear that MoT people think big. With some very exciting projects underway, it's time for us to put our ideas to work, to build our ministry's road to the future and to continue developing rewarding careers. ♦

Anatomy of an Avalanche – Avalanche Control in Challenging Times

Submitted by Ed Campbell, Avalanche Forecaster

It has been a busy season for the avalanche crew in Hope starting in early December with a three-day avalanche closure of Highway 1 in the Fraser Canyon and most recently with an eight-day closure of the Coquihalla between Hope and Merritt.

Avalanche crew Val Visotzky, Chris Link and Ed Campbell wait for the weather to clear, so they can continue their avalanche control work in the helicopter.

The La Niña winter predicted by Environment Canada has been in full force on all the local highways as well as around the province. Temperatures have remained on the cool side throughout the season and much of the precipitation in the Hope area has fallen as snow rather than the rain typical of recent years. The snow cover on the ground which has been present since mid November is finally disappearing and we are now seeing some early signs of spring.

The Coquihalla Highway in this area is located in a transitional area climatically. In recent years conditions have been typical of a coastal climate, with reasonably deep snowpacks that stabilize fairly quickly after winter storms. This year, however, things have been a little different. A cooler start to the season when the snowpack was still shallow resulted in a weak basal snowpack. It was not a problem until the big storm in early February began to rapidly add extra weight onto the basal weakness. More than 200 cm of new snow, in a few days at mountaintop, quickly changed the snowpack stability picture. To make things more interesting, sustained high winds during the same period transported huge amounts of this dry, new snow into many of the critical start zones. The Coquihalla was being primed for an avalanche cycle of significant size, reminiscent of the old Kettle Valley Railway days.

Reliant on daylight and reasonable weather, to conduct avalanche control with explosives via a helicopter, the only option was to close the highway initially. Active explosives control work using one, and sometimes two helicopters at a time, was conducted as weather permitted over a five-day period. Conditions were marginal at best with turbulent mountaintop winds gusting to 90 km/hr and poor visibility. Accessing the highest elevation target areas remained challenging throughout the storm period. Final control work was completed on day five when, due to favourable weather conditions, we were finally able to access the highest target areas.

Anatomy of an Avalanche continues on the next page...

Anatomy of an Avalanche *continued from page 11*

The plan for the explosives control work was to systematically bring down avalanches that had the potential to affect the highway. More than 60, 12.5 kg shots were deployed by helicopter to accomplish this. As the control work proceeded from north to south, safe work areas were established that allowed the road maintenance crews to go in and start reclaiming the highway. Days of heavy snowfall and drifting snow had resulted in deep snow accumulations on the highway with snowdrifts up to two metres deep. Additionally, there were half a dozen avalanche deposits from explosives control and natural events during the closure, that were across all four lanes up to six or more metres deep and 100 metres wide. The maintenance challenge was to get the road reopened, within three days after our explosives control work was completed. Snow removal continued for another two weeks after reopening.

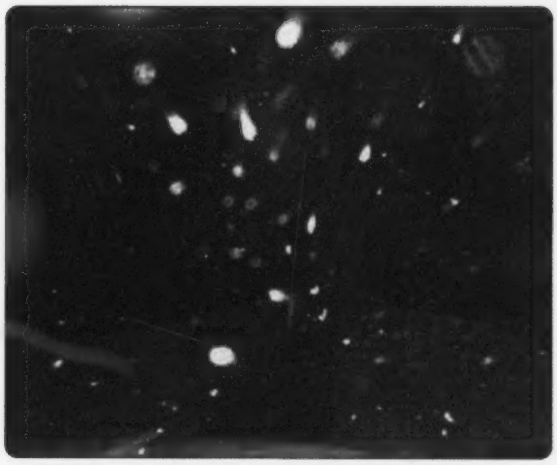
To keep things interesting for the avalanche crew, the bulk of the traffic normally destined for the Coquihalla was travelling through the Fraser Canyon, where another avalanche cycle occurred over the course of several days. Extra high traffic volumes combined with the rising avalanche hazard was a challenging combination. The Highway 3 route through Allison Pass remained relatively well behaved through the storm period, but was on our radar and required close monitoring. Some extra help from the avalanche crew in Penticton and the Avalanche Office in Victoria supplemented our three-person crew in Hope, at various times through the main part of the storm.

Staff of the Hope avalanche crew are Ed Campbell (Forecaster), Val Visotzky (Assistant Forecaster) and Chris Link (Avalanche Assistant). We received assistance from the Penticton crew of Nic Seaton and Steve Portman as well as from Doug Wilson of the Victoria Avalanche Office. ♦

Slide at Two Bears that occurred naturally while the road was closed.

Snowy Skeena Ride Along

Submitted by Don Ramsay, Skeena District Manager



Looking through the snowplow operator's view.

Very early, on a typically snowy February morning in the great Northwest, Grant Watson, Skeena District Area Manager, jumped in a truck with Nechako plow truck operator Dan Baker, for a ride from Terrace to Kitimat and back. It reinforced for Grant what a challenging job our maintenance contractors face all winter long in our tough climate. Grant says the thing that clued him in that this was going to be an interesting couple of hours was when Dan offered that, if Grant could see where the truck was supposed to be on the road, he should tell him.

Grant says he would encourage anyone who works with a maintenance contractor to get on board and share a few hours in their life. It's not as easy as just driving down the road plowing snow. Dan learned that the district staff are not only interested in what contractors do, but also how difficult the contractor's job really is. It's an understanding, on the part of both, that will go a long way toward future cooperation. ♦

Steve Portman – Public Servant Extraordinaire

Submitted by Todd Hubner, Cariboo District Manager

When you look up the definition of "Public Servant" in the dictionary, the term is defined as "a government official or employee." But we all know that being a public servant is much more than this. Although we are all government employees, we all bring huge commitment, dedication and passion to our worksite each day in serving the public and wanting to "make a difference." Steve Portman, an Avalanche Technician with the ministry's Avalanche and Weather Program is one individual whom really typifies this dedication and passion.

On Christmas Eve, around 5 p.m., I received a call at my residence from the Provincial Emergency Program (PEP). They were enquiring if we had any local Avalanche Techs who could assist in providing some guidance on how to search for two missing snowmobilers who had been caught in a back-country avalanche, about an hour and a half earlier. The avalanche occurred at a location approximately one hour east of 100 Mile House, in the Wells Grey Park area of the Cariboo Mountain Range. I told PEP to "leave it with me" and that I would see what I could do. I immediately called Steve Portman at his residence, and we in turn logged into a PEP conference call that was just beginning. Fortunately for all parties, Steve had just come out of the backcountry of the Wells/Barkerville Area and had just completed a number of snow profiles. Thus, he was well versed with current snow conditions in the Cariboo Mountains. Without hesitation, Steve agreed to take part in the search, knowing that there was a chance that these two snowmobilers could still be alive, if found soon. (Keep in mind it is Christmas Eve and Steve has young children).

Steve Portman, at work here in his avalanche duties, spent Christmas Eve and Christmas day searching for missing snowmobilers.

Given the urgency, a Buffalo Aircraft was immediately dispatched out of Comox. It picked Steve up in Penticton and subsequently dropped him at the 108 airstrip near 100 Mile House where Terry Murphy, one of Cariboo's Area Managers, provided him with additional rescue equipment. Steve then travelled with Search and Rescue Personnel to the site and proceeded to coordinate the search. The Buffalo Aircraft aided in the search throughout the evening by dropping flares over the deposit. One victim was recovered early in the evening. By approximately 11 p.m., it was clear that not much progress was being made in the recovery of the second individual, and it was agreed that all should stand down until first light. This would then give Steve an opportunity to assess any additional avalanche danger prior to re-commencing the search, and also allow the RCMP dog handlers to arrive and aide in the search.

The following morning (Christmas Day) Steve flew the area and determined that, although there was still a threat of additional avalanching, he deemed it safe enough to have himself and the dog handlers go into the area and continue the search. The second victim was subsequently recovered at 11:20 that morning, approximately 15 metres upslope from his snow machine which had been found about an hour earlier. In both instances, the victims were buried about 1.7 metres deep.

Following the recoveries, I sat in on a debrief teleconference that was chaired by PEP, at 1:30 p.m. on Christmas Day. Although both victims perished in the avalanche, the families were thankful that they had the opportunity for closure. During the call, there were many accolades for all parties involved (Search and Rescue, PEP, RCMP, the military and others) and in particular, Steve and his work.

Subsequent to the call, Steve and I talked about the events of the last 18 hours. He indicated that although somewhat tired all he really wanted was to get home and spend the remainder of Christmas with his family. Steve arrived back in Penticton later that evening for a late Christmas dinner.

Steve's dedication, willingness and personal sacrifice certainly didn't go un-noticed. He indicated to me that he'd do it all again in a heartbeat if he felt he could make a difference. It's experiences like this and people like Steve that make me realize what terrific people we have that work in this organization and how proud I am to be a part of it. ♦

CVSE SCR Teams Seek Input on Provincial Tour

Submitted by Cindy Hogg, Sean Kelly and Jim MacMillan, CVSE

As many of you are aware, CVSE is made up of a group of very dynamic people who are promoting road safety. This was proven even more so when South Coast Regional Director Tracy Cooper challenged the CVSE inspectors in his district. He wanted to be able to say "We heard you," by giving us the opportunity to provide input, and put forward recommendations for improvement in five areas. This could lead to a new era in CVSE! The CVSE inspectors in the region jumped into action and five CVSE teams from the region were formed:

- Team Education
- Team Officer Safety
- Team Workplace Environment
- Team Flexibility
- Team Reclassification

The teams worked hard over a three-month period with management guidance and representation, then presented their findings to the South Coast Regional Management Team with outstanding results. Tracy Cooper and the team were so impressed, the decision was made to take our recommendations around the province.

The Provincial CVSE Tour began, with a very busy schedule and short time frame. The locations visited were Kelowna, Kamloops, Fort St. John, Prince George, Cranbrook, Golden and Vancouver Island, with the tour concluding in the Lower Mainland District. The tour started in mid December and ended in mid February. The feedback and input given from the other regions and districts was amazing. There was a great sense of involvement from inspectors, with suggestions, both enlightening and unique to the three regions. The overall goal was achieved.

The experience and knowledge gained working on the teams and travelling around the province was even more than anticipated. The work ethic and camaraderie we all shared far exceeded the teams' expectations. It is important that we, CVSE as a whole, thank Tracy Cooper, Greg Gilks, Grant Lachmuth, Kevin Richter and Shanna Mason for giving us this amazing experience and opportunity to express our thoughts and concerns for the future of CVSE. The learning process was extremely worthwhile and an experience the committees will never forget.

Once the Provincial CVSE Tour came to an end, a provincial meeting was arranged for all of CVSE to attend. The meeting was held at the Vancouver Delta Airport Inn in Richmond, March 3 to 4 and was facilitated by Dawn Major, Acting Deputy Director for CVSE. This was not only an opportunity to have all of CVSE together to discuss the continued success and strategies of the branch but also to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of CVSE.

Again, the comments and suggestions put forward by all CVSE, truly brings home the fact that the inspectors have a passion and a great sense of pride in what they do on a day-to-day basis — making B.C. The Greatest Place on Earth! ♦

Above: CVSE staff in Cranbrook. Left: Jim MacMillan and Sean Kelly en route. Right: Cindy Hogg and Jim MacMillan in Fort St. John.

Restoring Habitat along the Cowichan River, Vancouver Island

Submitted by Penelope Simpson, Environmental Technician (Co-op)
and Sean Wong, Sr. Biologist

"This shows how the province, federal government and Cowichan Tribes can work together for the fish," J.R. Elliot, Cowichan River Hatchery Manager.

Habitat restoration work occurred on Cowichan Tribes land this past summer. The work was led by Sean Wong, Engineering Branch, in partnership with Cowichan Tribes and other stakeholder groups. This work is a success story demonstrating how our Environmental Enhancement Fund not only restores habitat but also builds valued relationships with those who share common goals.

An on-site meeting of representatives from MoT, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, the Cowichan (Tribes) River Hatchery and Cowichan Native Plant Nursery.

Background:

The Cowichan River is a national Canadian Heritage River, once one of the most valuable and productive salmon and trout streams in British Columbia. It is a river named by and after Cowichan Tribes; the largest individual First Nation band in B.C. The river is a cultural and symbolic icon. It is represented in much of Cowichan Tribes lore, because salmon were once plentiful, and the tribes' largest protein source and the basis of much of their settlements, lifestyle and existence. Because of anthropogenic impacts, the fishery that used to attract visitors from Europe and all over North America is now a shadow of its former glory. The restoration work led by MoT, was the first multi-stakeholder stewardship roundtable established to restore the river's health and to integrate sustainable growth within the Cowichan watershed.

The Five Fingers Hatchery Sidechannel is named for being the fifth in a series of channels. It is alongside a chinook salmon fish hatchery, operated since 1977, by Cowichan Tribes, under contract to Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO). This and many other critical fish habitats along the river were isolated by the construction of the Trans-Canada Highway and diking flood protection works decades ago, when environmental and fisheries concerns were not given as much care and consideration.

The Restoration Project

In 2006, the initial phase of the restoration project began when about 80 truckloads of surplus large woody debris, produced from Trans-Canada Highway 1 clearing, were carefully placed by an excavator into 800 metres of a restored stream along the Five Fingers Hatchery Sidechannel. MoT, DFO, Cowichan Tribes and the Cowichan River Hatchery were involved in the initial placement, commonly referred to as habitat complexing. In addition to the placement of the woody debris, about 1,000 square metres of new habitat was created, consisting of a test off-channel pond and three spawning platforms.

Success was confirmed within the first season after the restoration efforts as numerous juvenile coho were seen hiding amongst the wood debris in the new off-channel habitats, and salmon were spawning on the constructed spawning platforms.

"It is heart-warming to respond to Mother Nature's cries. The Cowichan Tribes community are inspired by being able to work together to restore the salmon," Ken Elliott, Cowichan Native Plant Nursery Manager.

Restoring Habitat continues on the next page...

Restoring Habitat along the Cowichan River *continued from page 15*

The results triggered development of an expanded, multi-faceted project during summer 2007. Additional partners were eager to participate, including the Ministry of Environment (who consider this a priority watershed), the provincial Living Rivers Program, Cowichan Native Plant Nursery and numerous environmental community and school groups like the Cowichan Valley Naturalists and the Koksilah Elementary School.

Under the direction of Sean Wong, Sr. Biologist, three excavators and off-road and dump trucks were mobilized to construct about 15,000 square metres of new habitat. Collaboration took place between MoT, Cowichan First Nations and DFO throughout the project.

In November, planting sessions resulted in riparian enhancements with about 3,000 native trees and shrubs. Eight hundred trees were donated from Fanny Bay Salmonid Enhancement Society and the remainder came from the Cowichan Tribes Native Plant Nursery. The local community, school and First Nation groups from as far away as Washington, Oregon and California brought their shovels and work gloves to plant native trees and shrubs.

Predicted Results and Benefits

Tom Rutherford, DFO Community Advisor, has boldly predicted that this project will produce more coho than Lake Cowichan, a waterbody thousands of hectares in area and with dozens of feeder creeks and rivers. Mel Sheng, DFO Restoration Biologist, said that one of the fingers of similar offchannel habitat along the Cowichan used to produce 60,000 coho smolts, which is more than the production these days from entire river systems along the coast.

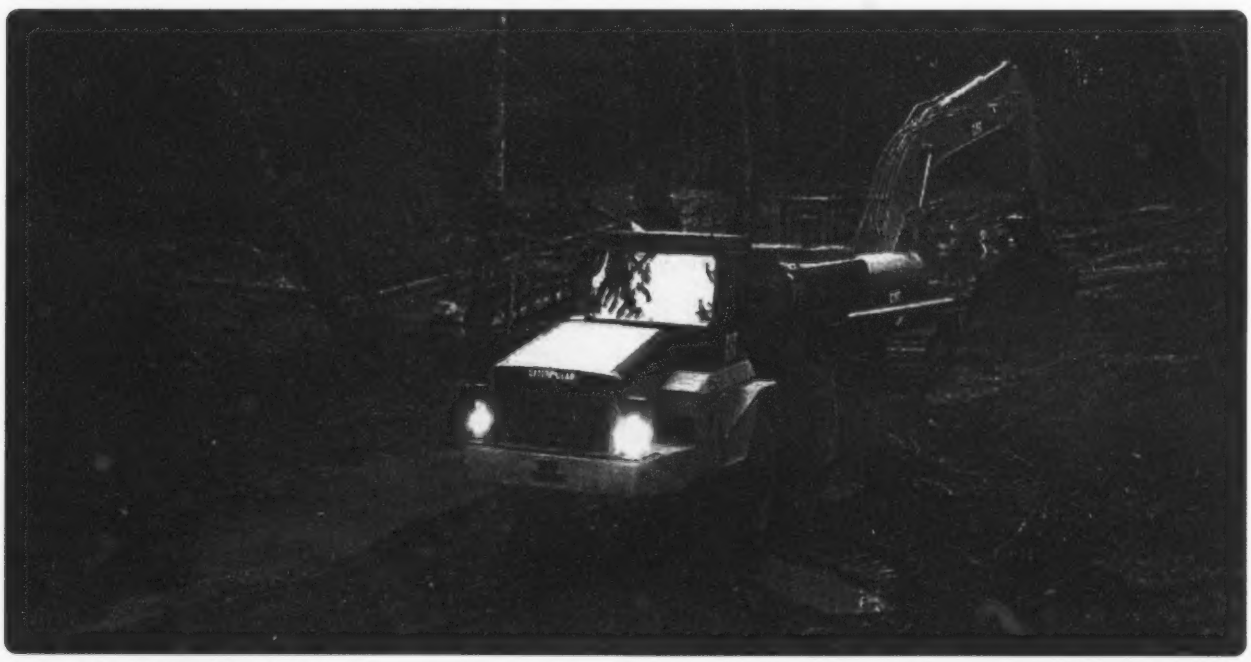
In addition to the direct restoration of fish and wildlife habitat, the Cowichan River Five Fingers Restoration Project has many ancillary benefits. Cowichan Tribes members, including fish hatchery and plant nursery staff, and heavy equipment operators and contractors provided employment, mentoring and training in environmental restoration.

The location of the site is convenient for future educational and stewardship opportunities, including the North America Indigenous Games which will be hosted by the Cowichan Tribes in summer 2008. Upward of 20,000 participants and visitors are expected to partake in this athletic and cultural celebration. Several education, stewardship and nature tours have already taken place and Cowichan Tribes are considering developing the site for full public access.

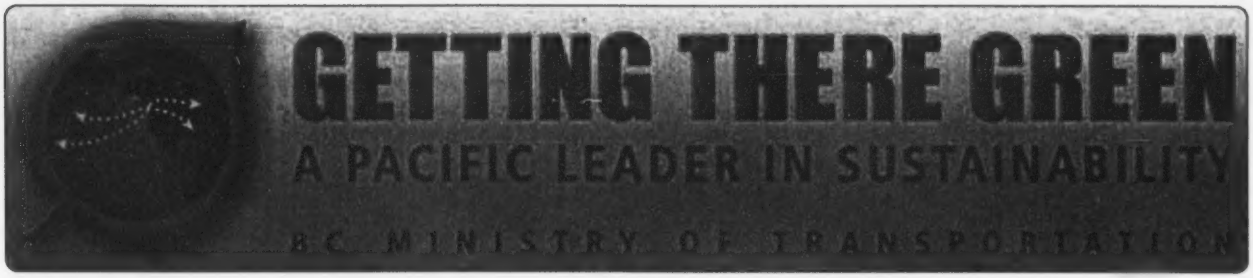
Acknowledgements

Projects such as the Cowichan River Five Fingers restoration are possible because of the project partners and their common goal – to restore ecosystems to so that future generations may enjoy the wild resources of B.C.

Project Partners: Cowichan Tribes, B.C. Ministry of Transportation, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Ministry of Environment, Georgia Basin Living Rivers Program, Cowichan River Hatchery, Cowichan Native Plant Nursery, Cowichan Valley Naturalists and Young Naturalists, Sh-hwuykwselu Streamkeepers, Mid-Vancouver Island Habitat Enhancement Society, Fanny Bay Salmonid Enhancement Society, BC Conservation Foundation, Koksilah Elementary School and Pacific Salmon Foundation. ♦



Heavy equipment at work on the restoration.



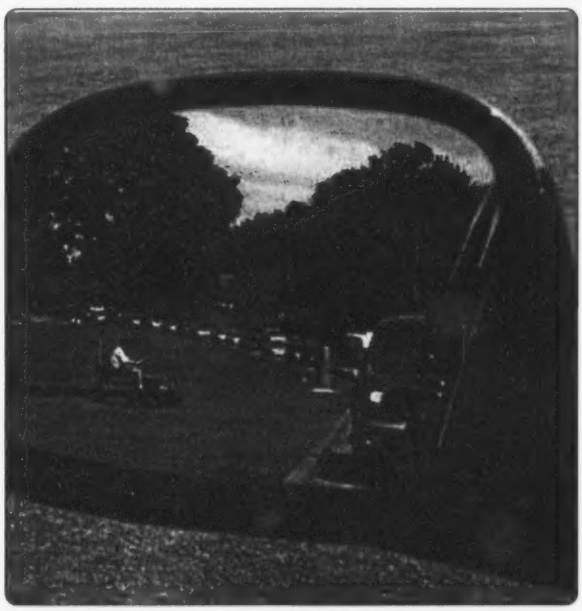
Greening Our Borders a Winning Idea

Submitted by Kirsten Youngs, Administrative Assistant

Trapped in a prison of steel and unbearable heat, the noxious fumes rise to your nostrils, making you dizzy and confused. Movement is painstakingly slow, freedom mere metres away. The impending interrogation makes every bead of sweat taste like fear as you prepare your story.

No, this isn't the plot from the latest summer blockbuster; it's every cross-border commuter's nightmarish reality and Simon Leung of the Transportation Planning and Policy Branch is working toward a solution.

Simon was travelling in B.C., with friends from Toronto, when he first got an idea for reducing border congestion. He had lots of time to think in the almost three-hour period it took them to cross over to Seattle. Looking at it from a visitor's perspective clarified Simon's vision. Surrounding the Peace Arch is lush green grass, flowering gardens, children playing...and nearly five tonnes of CO_2e accumulated by the 888,000 litres of fuel burned by the surrounding idling cars.



The rear view on border back-ups.

Simon's cross-border realization and a partnership between the Ministry of Tourism, Sports and the Arts and MoT has recently culminated into a first place win for Greening the Border, a Green Ideas Shine proposal submitted earlier this year. Simon served on the steering committee, contributing his expertise regarding border issues and greenhouse gas (GHG) calculations. The initiative for the project was a request for innovative proposals to achieve significant and measurable GHG emissions reductions within ministries, across government and province-wide. Greening the Border aims to reduce border congestion and wait times, while reducing our carbon footprint.

The average wait time at the Canada-U.S. border between B.C. and Washington is currently 30 minutes. However, as every traveller knows, during peak times you can expect to wait anywhere from one to three hours. While waiting for border clearance, drivers leave their engines running for the majority of their wait, in an effort to keep pace with the moving vehicles. This extended idling contributes significantly to GHG emissions.

Idea: If traffic was allowed to move at time-specified intervals, drivers could turn off their engines and then restart their vehicle to move it forward once they were given the signal. **Solution:** Greening the Border.

The ultimate goal of Greening the Border is to explore various ways in which emissions can be reduced. The concepts under consideration are: anti-idling signs and zones; or a series of automated gates or solar powered stoplights within each lane. In each of these scenarios, traffic would be allowed to move at approximately 10-minute intervals. Drivers would turn off their engines immediately upon entering a lane and would only restart their vehicle when it is indicated that it is okay to do so. This would allow drivers and passengers to leave their vehicle without the fear of losing their spot, or as experience with

continues on the next page...

Greening Our Borders a Winning Idea *continued from page 17*

BC Ferries lines remind us, the humiliation of being the one person who didn't return to their vehicle on time and is now holding up the entire line up.

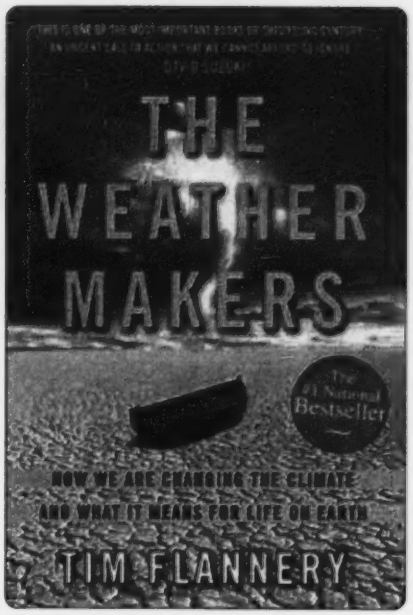
By Simon's calculations, the implementation of this anti-idling strategy would result in a 95 per cent reduction of GHG emissions. On average, traffic would be in motion only 1.5 minutes instead of idling a full half hour. This will equate to a reduction of 1991 tonnes of CO_2e per year! What an effect an idea can bring about!

A recognition lunch for the first-ever winners from the Green Ideas Shine Program was held in January. Congratulations go out to Simon Leung and the rest of his team for all of their hard work. It's encouraging to think that the general musings of a frustrated traveller could result in such ingenuity. ♦

Deputy Minister to the Premier Jessica McDonald; Public Service Agency Minister Ida Chong; the Greening Our Borders Team: Angie Mallhi, Simon Leung, Linda Beltrano and Olga Klimko; and Head of the Climate Action Secretariat Graham Whitmarsh.

Climate Action Program Recommended Read

This book provides a fascinating glimpse into the future of our planet. It examines the impacts of climate change and the opportunities to embrace new and emerging eco technologies.


THE WEATHER MAKERS
The #1 National Bestseller
HOW WE ARE CHANGING THE CLIMATE AND WHAT IT MEANS FOR LIFE ON EARTH
TIM FLANNERY

Bob Penner Celebrates his Green Ideas Shine Leader Award

Submitted by Deborah Newby, Manager, Internal Operations,Climate Action Program

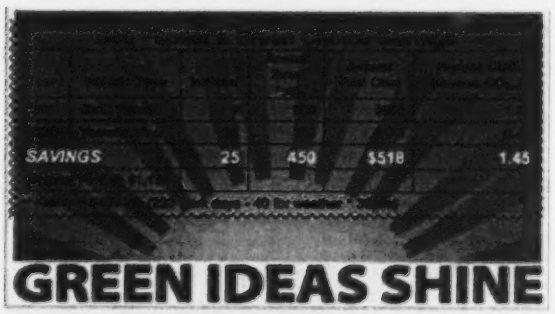
Bob was quoted as saying, *"Scooter or pickup truck? That was easy!"*

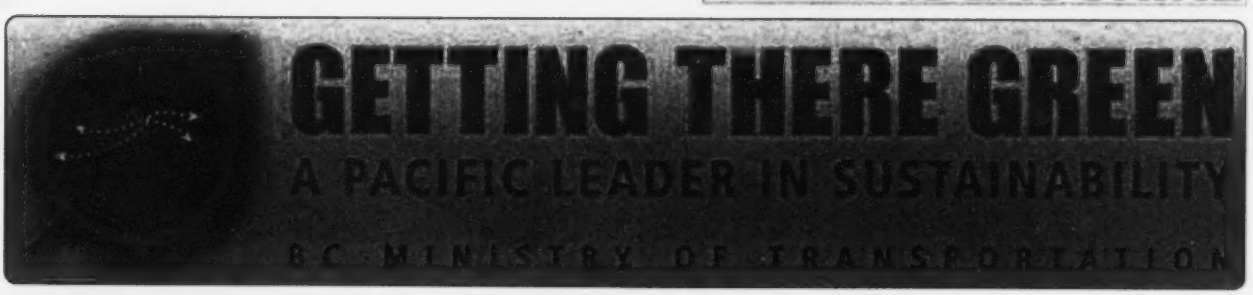
Bob Penner is one of three Field Services Managers awarded the "leader" award in the first Green Ideas Shine Challenge. "Leader" award winners had their choice of the following prizes:

1. $2,500 credit toward the purchase of a hybrid or other fuel efficient vehicle
2. $2,500 toward the purchase of energy efficient home appliances, or
3. Two-year transit pass

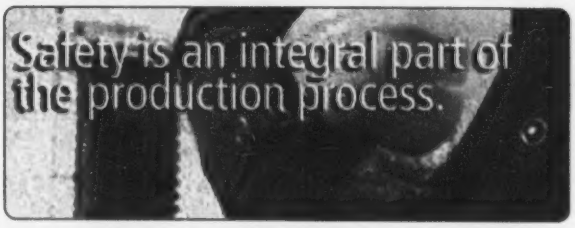
Bob chose use his credit for the purchase of his new 2007 Yamaha Vino.

In addition to looking forward to the wind blowing through his hair, he is enthusiastic about the fuel and Green House Gas (GHG) Emission savings. ♦





Ministry Safety Plan – A Valuable and Renewable Resource



Submitted by Tracy Wynnyk,
Field Services Safety Advisor

Well it's that time of year again, and like the ground hog peeking out to see what kind of year it's going to be, we find ourselves anticipating and planning new proposals, projects, contracts, studies etc., for the upcoming year. These processes, along with other daily operations, have prompted the review of activities, and a variety of questions and calls for advice, regarding health and safety. Requests have related to both office and field environments, whereby people have been seeking information on procedures, forms, assessments and the like. I have been very happy to help and have found most of the requested information in our ministry's safety plan. This document, referred to by many as the blue, yellow and orange manuals, resides on the intranet located at: **http://gww.th.gov.bc.ca/gwwhsmanuals/Content/Home/Home.asp**

The three colours categorize the degree of hazard presented by various concerns or activities. For example, if you are looking for general information, and low hazard work, such as office-based tasks, you will find that in the blue manual. Information regarding moderate hazard work and field environments is located in the orange manual, and the yellow manual addresses high hazard work, relative to specific field operations, including bridge, avalanche and geotech.

Within these ministry manuals you will find:

- Policies relative to the ministry's safety program
- Procedures for a number of activities and specific jobs
- Various charts to assist with risk assessments
- Forms for working through situations, problems or recording information; and
- Contact information and links to certain expertise both within and outside the ministry.

These manuals are designed as a resource to assist ministry personnel in meeting or exceeding WorkSafe (WCB) Regulations. By reviewing related topics you will obtain valuable information, relative to various activities and jobs, many of which have been provided by business units and regions. This expertise can be of great assistance when looking at implementing your own safe work practices, for activities you initiate or encounter.

The Ministry of Transportation is a diverse organization with a variety of business units providing unique knowledge and expertise. Understanding the history and the intricacies of various jobs can be overwhelming, and maintaining information of this nature on a regular basis is no small task. If you notice information that is out of date, find procedures that have changed or identify items requiring our review, please feel free to contact Scot Mortimer, Manager Corporate Safety or Tracy Wynnyk, Occupational Risk and Safety Advisor with Field Services. We would be happy to review and update the information as necessary. ♦

Take a moment to check out this fabulous resource:

http://gww.th.gov.bc.ca/gwwhsmanuals/Content/Home/Home.asp

as well as the Provincial Field Services website at:

http://gww.th.gov.bc.ca/gwwr2/Content/FieldServices3/fieldservices.asp

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A Landmark Event

Submitted by Don Ramsay,
Skeena District Manager

This is the first container train to carry a load of cargo that travelled from China to the Port of Prince Rupert. The photo captures the train destined for the American mid-west, as it passes through the Skeena District, west of Terrace, along Highway 16 and the Skeena River. ♦

Photo by Port of Prince Rupert

Alex Fraser Bridge Joints Replaced

Submitted by Leanne Flood, Stakeholder Relations

Last summer, work began to replace the modular expansion joints at each end of the main span of the Alex Fraser Bridge. Both joints were at the end of their service life and required replacement.

Put the words "bridge" and "Lower Mainland" together and you have significant traffic challenges to address, especially with a work zone that creates a large gap in the roadway surface. At this particular location, weekday traffic volumes are approximately 110,000 vehicles, with typical peak periods of more than 6,000 vehicles per hour. There is no significant seasonal variation, but to minimize the impact on traffic, lane reductions were carried out evenings, nights and weekends, and closures were restricted to overnight on weekends. Traffic pattern changes were advertised through the ministry website notifications page, DriveBC, on-site changeable message signs, and newspaper ads. Traffic advisories were picked up by some radio stations as well. There were also notifications faxed out to about 20 external stakeholder groups.

With traffic in mind, the first job was to put in pre-cast concrete ramps over the joint area to span a 5.5 metre gap at a 5 per cent grade. This work required lane reductions, but once in place, these mini bridges allowed continued traffic movement during the majority of the work.

The next step was to remove the existing joints. Crews used ultra-high pressure water jets – a highly effective method of demolition that pinpoints cut areas without damaging the rebar.

Complete lane closures occurred at crunch time. The ramps were lifted, the old joints were hoisted out, the new three-lane wide joints dropped into place and the temporary ramps were re-installed for the finishing work. The construction contract was completed in January 2008.

David Mintak, Senior Project Manager, South Coast Region, was relieved to say, "Traffic wasn't impacted as much as we thought. The temporary bridging scheme amounted to little more than a speed bump on the bridge." Also, the initial concern about worker safety and speed enforcement turned out to be a non-starter, as traffic actually slowed down significantly while adjusting to the temporary ramps.

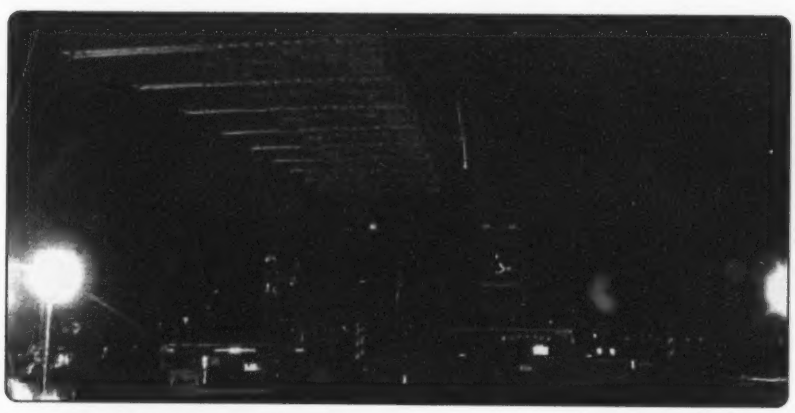
Peter Chiu, Bridge Construction Supervisor, South Coast Region, said, "The overall experience worked out. Kingston Construction deserves kudos, as they had the right experience and staff for the job."

"Looking back, I'm very satisfied that the job didn't affect the public too adversely," noted Mintak. "We were able to maintain continuous traffic flow, except for a handful of directional closures, while spanning a sizeable gap in the structure. Bringing stakeholders into the picture at an early stage definitely contributed to the project's success – and we're confident the new joints will last at least another 20 years!" ♦

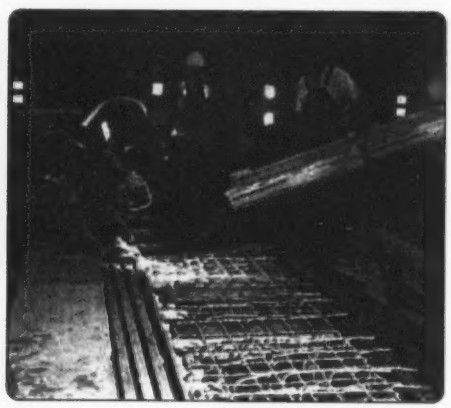
- Earth Tech Consultants did the design work, including the product research for the replacement joints.
- Earth Tech received a finalist award at the ministry's Deputy Minister Awards held January 29, for design and contract preparation of the structure.
- Kingston Construction Ltd. was awarded the $4.4 million construction contract, with traffic management plans by Pacific Coast Traffic Planning.

Alex Fraser Bridge

- 21 years old – opened to traffic in 1986
- Spans the south arm of the Fraser River on Highway 91
- Six lanes wide – 33.6 metres
- Road grade is 5 per cent
- Main span is 465 metres long
- Total length is 930 metres, plus two approach structures approximately 800 metres in length
- Towers are 154 metres tall
- 144 cables – 72 per tower



The new bridge joint is lowered into place.



Cement is poured onto the new bridge joint.

Whistler Nordic Centre Access Roads

Submitted by Hubert Mock and Matt Choquette, Project Management Services

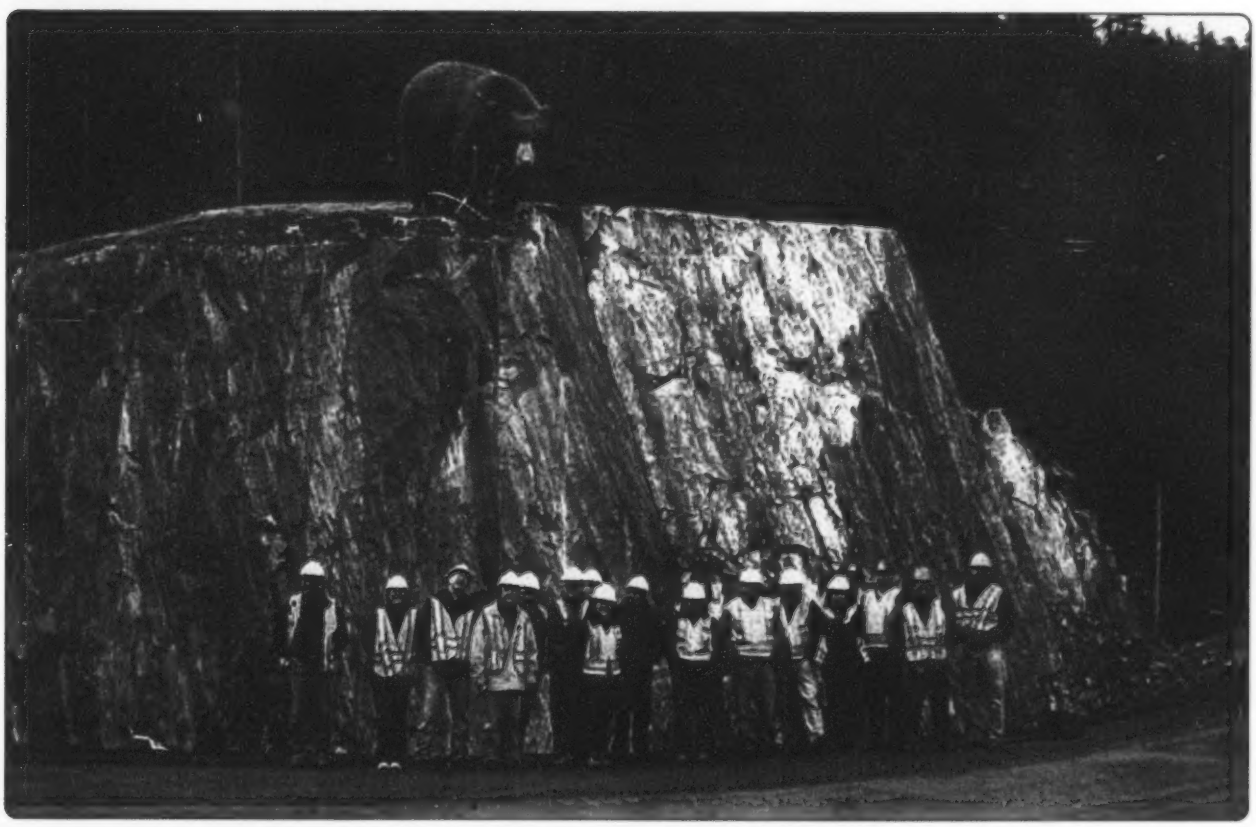
The Richmond Oval, The Whistler Sliding Centre, The Hillcrest/Nat Bailey Stadium Park and the Whistler Nordic Centre – all these are competition sites built from the ground up for the 2010 Olympic Games. The Whistler Nordic Centre was being constructed by the Vancouver Olympic Committee and would host all Nordic competitions - our ministry's contribution would be to build the access to it.

Right from the start this project showed its uniqueness as 2010 security dictated that two access roads would be required – one for the general public and the other for the VIPs and athletes. One road was just to be used during the Olympics and only involved upgrades to an existing Forest Service Road. However, the main access (the one used by the public) would become a permanent road for the venue and be handed over to Whistler after the games. Building this road was just like the Coquihalla days – we cut, blasted and bridged our way through nearly 10 kilometres of the most challenging terrain and weather B.C. has to offer.

The main road branches off Highway 99 North, at about 500 metres of elevation and provides a beautiful scenic drive through the Callaghan Valley, with two creek crossings and a major bridge structure over a raging mountain river. It then climbs to an elevation of 800 metres and ends at the Nordic Centre. This area has a reputation for generous and consistent accumulations of snow, starting in late fall and enduring to early spring. The venue encompasses 22 kilometres of cross-country competition and training trails, two ski jumps, a biathlon facility, and three temporary stadiums, each with a spectator capacity of 12,000.

An issue of particular interest on this project was the geotechnical conditions throughout the project corridor. Typical subsurface conditions comprise of only a thin layer of organic material overlying a mixture of dense sand, glacial till, cobbles, boulders and bedrock. Glacial till materials, which are exposed on the surface of cut and fill slopes, are very dense in dry conditions but turn sloppy when saturated.

Whistler Nordic Centre continues on page 22...



Project management team, at the "Y" intersection. The watchful bear was creatively added to the photo, courtesy of Field Services.

Whistler Nordic Centre *continued from page 21*

As the area is typical for very high levels of precipitation in spring and fall, the project team proactively hydro seeded 16 hectares of the cut and fill slopes late in the summer – not once but twice – to protect them against the autumn rains. However, the lack of organic materials to provide moisture and nourishment prevented the vegetation from establishing roots. When the Pineapple Expresses of 2006 dumped their heavy rains, the job site suffered many severe wash outs as sloughing failures developed throughout the project.

After much investigation, and costly emergency repair works using rock blanket reinforcements, the project team sought the answer to the problem through EcoBlanket – a product that promised quick and sure erosion control and re-vegetation on every slope it comes in contact with.

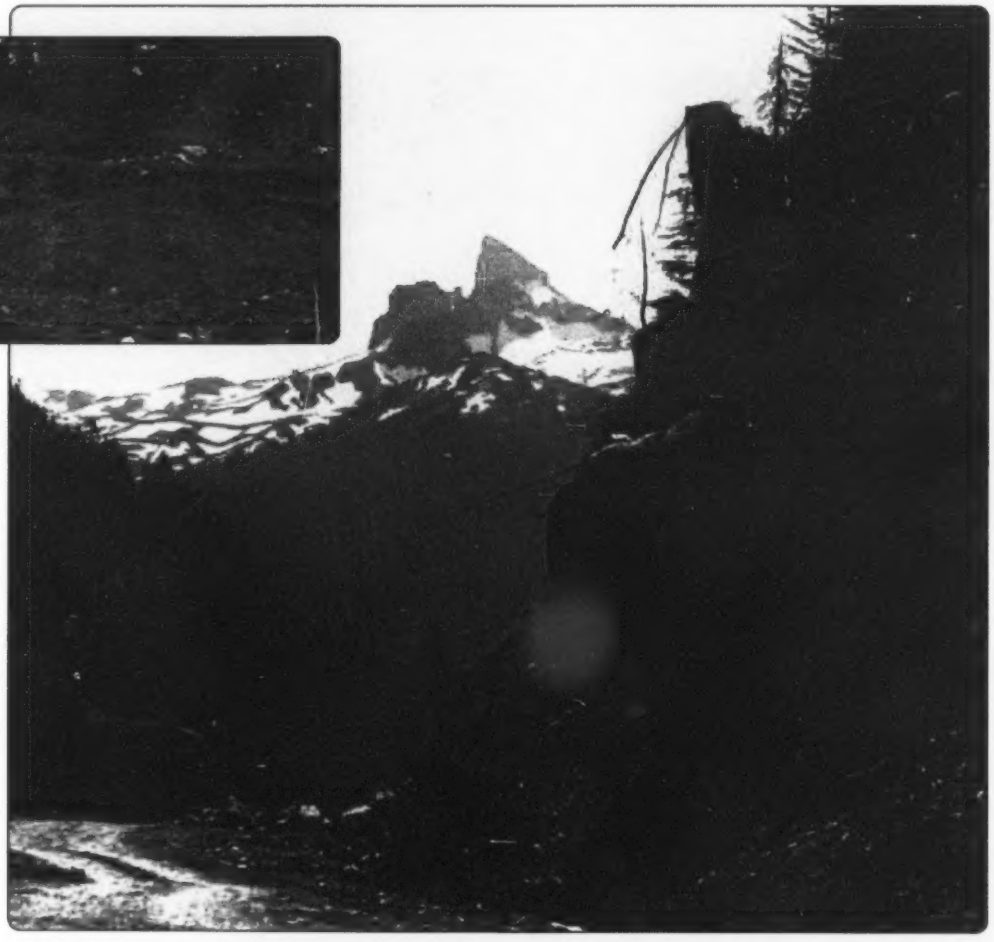
Produced by Denbow Transport Ltd., the blanket material was produced on VANOC's Nordic site using composted wood waste from the project area that is mixed with grass seeds and blown onto the slopes. Two inches of this product was applied on all exposed soil areas throughout the project. The plants quickly took root and fortified the compost into chunky mulch that turned the slopes lush green and provided protection from the torrential Callaghan Valley rains. This cost-effective remedy saved the project from using additional expensive shot rock armoring and could also be viewed as a carbon credit for using an environmentally friendly alternative. (For more information on this product contact Project Supervisor Dan Templeton.)

Another point of interest was the discovery of the roadway's natural landmark – a house size boulder just north of the Callaghan River where the two access roads meet. The boulder was so perfectly positioned that the two intersecting roads formed "Ys" around it to create the intersection. The rock became a favorite backdrop for pictures of visiting groups.

Upon completion of the project, the Whistler Nordic Centre Access Road Project Team was selected to receive the Deputy Minister's Award under the Significant Project Category.

Congratulations team on a job well done! ♦

EcoBlanket taking root.



The spectacular mountain view from the new road.

Come Ride with Us – The Transit Branch

Submitted by Robyn Cooper, Transit Analyst

In January, there was a big leap into the future of transit in British Columbia. Premier Gordon Campbell, along with Transportation Minister Kevin Falcon, announced the Provincial Transit Plan. This exciting and ambitious proposal calls for over $14 billion in transit-related spending and development by 2020 over the next 12 years.

As we all know, the strength of the transportation network in this province is of the utmost importance. It allows goods to be moved, services to be reached and people to go about their daily lives. But we also know that British Columbia has new transportation challenges the province has never before experienced. Greenhouse gas emissions and climate change, increasing levels of obesity among children and adults, and urban sprawl are issues that we are all facing as a population. The Provincial Transit Plan was developed as a way of tackling these problems head-on.

So, what exactly does the Provincial Transit Plan call for? Briefly put, the goal is to double transit ridership, and to decrease transportation greenhouse gas emissions by 4.7 million tonnes by 2020. No small feat! To do this, we need to get more people out of their cars and onto the public transit systems, walking or cycling.

The plan's highlights include up to 1,600 new clean technology buses to increase bus service, four new and expanded light rapid transit lines across Metro Vancouver, and nine RapidBus BC corridors. Add to that 1,000 new secure bike lockers and a brand new, comprehensive cycling strategy to complement the Provincial Transit Plan, and getting around without a car will be an increasingly accessible option for people all over the province!

Most of us know the many benefits an increased use of transit will bring – everything from a healthier environment to healthier bodies. But there are other benefits too – for instance, having transit in place to support progressive community design, where people can work closer to where they live. That means people spend less time sitting in traffic and more time getting out and enjoying all the great things our communities have to offer!

The Provincial Transit Plan is a huge investment in the future of British Columbia. Working with the federal and local governments and service providers like BC Transit and TransLink, the Ministry of Transportation is dedicated to reaching the goals the plan sets out. To this end, a brand new branch – the Transit Branch – has been created to make sure that the programs and projects called for are in place to meet our goals by 2020.

Interested in working on this new and fascinating area of the ministry? Well, the transit branch is currently in the process of staffing some key positions that will include two research officers, a financial advisor, a policy manager and a project manager. Not that we want to "steal" anyone away from the rewarding and successful work they're already doing, of course, but the new branch is going to be an exciting place to work as the program gets developed and implemented, so look for transit branch postings in the very near future... and come ride with us! ♦

The Transit Team: Robyn Cooper, Transit Analyst; John Coombs, Manager Transit Program Monitoring; Sheila Taylor, ADM Finance and Management Services Department; Jim Hester, Director Transit.

Transit Joke:

Transit Rider: "Does this bus go to the university?"

Bus driver: "No sir, it's not clever enough."

To learn more about the Provincial Transit Plan, go to:

http://www.th.gov.bc.ca/Transit_Plan/index.html

South Coast Region Celebrates National Engineering and Geoscience Week

Submitted by Patrick McCune, Rockwork Technician

In celebration of National Engineering and Geoscience week, March 1 to 9, South Coast Regional Manager for Engineering Patrick Livolsi, invited engineering staff to share cake, juice and coffee. Patrick and South Coast Regional Director Tracy Cooper thanked the group for their contributions to regional road and bridge projects over the years.

Professional engineers and geoscientists have a significant, if not always obvious, impact on public safety and quality of life in B.C. In the community and beyond, they enhance and protect human life by combining creativity, scientific knowledge and innovation in their professional practice.

The Engineering and Geoscientist Week celebration cake was enjoyed by all, after the heavy equipment completed the cake construction.

New Dynamic Message Signs on the Coquihalla and Trans Canada Highways

Submitted by Dave Schleppe, Program Manager, Thompson Nicola

Users of the Coquihalla and the Trans Canada Highways in Kamloops will have noticed three new LED dynamic message signs installed this winter. Three new LED reader boards were installed near Sowaqua Interchange north of Hope, Kane Valley south of Merritt, and in Kamloops just east of Highway 5A. The existing structures were utilized but new communication and power systems, control cabinets and cellular modem services were installed as well.

Bright new changeable message sign.

As part of an overall improvement strategy for the Coquihalla Corridor and interconnecting routes, the new reader boards were installed to enhance the level of communication on the provincial highway network. The old flip styled changeable message sign boards were largely obsolete and difficult to maintain, as well as being insufficient to meet the unique needs of the highway users. Three guiding principles were used as the basis for developing a changeable message sign strategy for the Southern Interior Region which included the need for simplicity, reliability and message primacy. LED full matrix signs were identified as the preferred technology for this study, due to the legibility and level of sophistication they can offer. The strategy also identifies more appropriate locations for existing and new reader boards based on strategic decision making points along the highways.

The area of influence for the changeable message sign strategy includes Hope to Kamloops, Kamloops to Cache Creek, Cache Creek to Hope, Merritt to Peachland, and Peachland to Osoyoos, and will look at other locations as the program evolves. Particular attention has been placed upon the area around the Great Bear Snowshed on the Coquihalla, as numerous incidents over the years have occurred on this part of the corridor.

The Thompson Nicola District was the project sponsor and with the excellent services of the South Coast Electrical Engineering group, specifically Jatinder Hayer and Abid Sivic, the project was delivered on time and within budget.

Thanks to Jurgen Lutter, Bridge Area Manager, Merritt; Jim Richardson, Southern Interior Region Senior Programming Engineer; and Harvey Nelson, Operations Manager, Kamloops for helping me put this program together. ♦

Bigger Than You Think! – Wildlife in British Columbia

Submitted by Leonard Sielecki, Environmental Issues Analyst

British Columbia is home to many of the largest wild animals in North America. Stories of majestic moose and gigantic grizzlies are an integral part of our province's history. Although the folklore surrounding these creatures may make them sound larger than life, many of the species of wildlife in British Columbia are actually much bigger than many people can imagine.

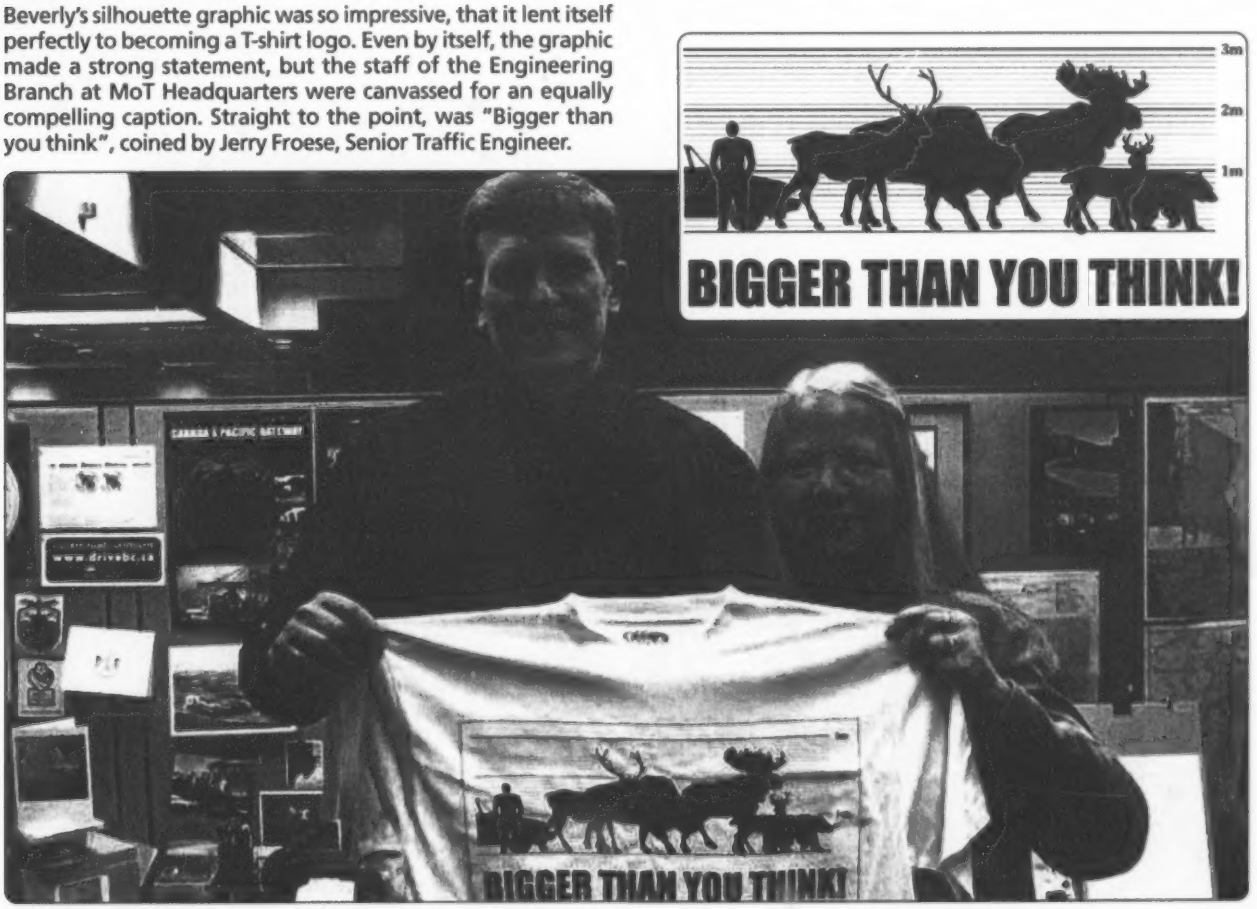
Although the ministry has developed one of the most comprehensive inventories of species-specific wildlife warning signs in the world, communicating the size of the ungulates (deer, bison, moose and elk) and the carnivores (black bears and grizzlies) to motorists hasn't been easy. It can be hard to appreciate just how big a moose, grizzly or bison can be, especially if you've never seen one in real life.

For challenges like this, the ministry has a wealth of talent and imagination. Using her artistic wizardry, Beverly van Druten-Blais, Graphics Design Specialist, MoT Headquarters, developed a relatively simple, yet incredibly effective collection of wild animal silhouettes to illustrate the sizes of ungulates and carnivores, in relation to the sizes of a typical man and typical automobile.

Beverly's silhouette graphic was so impressive, that it lent itself perfectly to becoming a T-shirt logo. Even by itself, the graphic made a strong statement, but the staff of the Engineering Branch at MoT Headquarters were canvassed for an equally compelling caption. Straight to the point, was "Bigger than you think", coined by Jerry Froese, Senior Traffic Engineer.

The graphic and caption made their grand debut in a ministry presentation I gave at the International Conference on Ecology and Transportation in Little Rock, Arkansas, in April 2007. The perfect combination of Beverly's graphics magic and Jerry's literary knack has resulted in international attention being drawn to the ministry's wildlife accident reduction initiatives.

Interest in the ministry's "Bigger than you think!" concept has been expressed by the Defenders of Wildlife, an internationally prominent wildlife advocacy organization based in Washington, DC., the Western Transportation Institute, a recognized American centre of excellence in rural transportation research and education, and the Hungarian Institute of Ecology and Botany, a European leader in applied environmental research. ♦



The above chart shows how automobiles and people measure up to wildlife.
Slogan creator Jerry Froese with Graphic Artist Beverly van Druten-Blais.

Taking the "What the heck is it?" Out of Roadkill Identification

Submitted by Len Sielecki, Environmental Issues Analyst

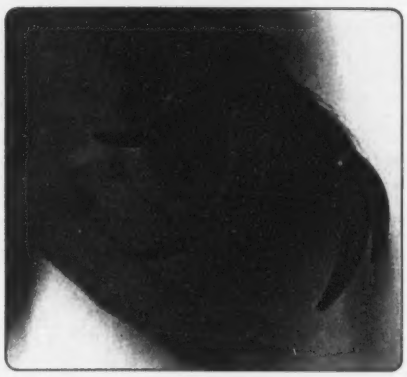
With books like *Flattened Fauna* and *How to Cook Roadkill* in print, raising the more serious aspects of roadkill identification has been challenging. For more than 30 years, the ministry has been monitoring highway-related wildlife mortality with its Wildlife Accident Reporting System. Each day, the ministry's maintenance contractors collect detailed species and location information on wildlife found on provincial highways.

For this data to be most useful for planning and operational purposes, accurate location and species information is essential. With the ministry's Landmark Kilometre Inventory system, the location of animals killed on provincial highways can determined, down to the metre. However, identifying the species of a carcass can be more problematic, especially if the person handling it isn't familiar with the local species of wildlife. To assist ministry maintenance contractors to more accurately identify wildlife, I developed the Wildlife Roadkill Identification Guide.

The guide's layout and graphics were designed by Beverly van Druten-Blais, Graphic Design Specialist and Nancy Dolan, Graphics Technician of the Engineering Branch at Headquarters. By incorporating an overwhelming number of photographs, on a less-than-glamourous subject matter, Beverly and Nancy produced an incredibly attractive and informative publication.

The guide provides information primarily on larger wildlife species found on British Columbia highways. It includes a general description of the physical appearance, life stages, abundance and geographic distribution of each animal. The guide also provides details on identifiable physical characteristics, such as coat colour, physical size and footprint patterns. By cross referencing these details, with typical seasonal periods of activity, to known mapped habitat locations near provincial highways, identifying wildlife remains should be easier.

Improvements in species identification will help support the ministry's species-specific wildlife impact mitigation measures. In addition, accurate species identification will contribute to the decision process for ministry investments in wildlife exclusion systems to protect motorists and wildlife.



The guide appears to be the first of its kind by a transportation agency in North America, and can be found at the Engineering Branch's website: **http://www.th.gov.bc.ca/publications/eng_publications/environment/WRIG/** ♦

Giant Spider Takes Over Highway 7

Is this the newest highway hazard? Will DriveBC be adding "Giant Spider" to its listing of road conditions that drivers may wish to avoid?

No, it's just near April Fool's Day, and we thought we'd share this unusual photo with you. Thanks to Simon Walker, of Avalanche and Weather Programs, for forwarding this image of a spider who got up close and personal with a DriveBC webcam. ♦

Emergency Response Training an Eye Opener

Article Submitted by Mike Neill and Cindy Hogg, CVSE

From Feb. 26 to 28, a class of 22 MoT employees attended Corporate Emergency Response Team Training. This training would be a valuable experience for every employee in the ministry.

Mike Neill and Cindy Hogg ready to respond.

Not only is it an experience in emergency response tactics, it opens your eyes on how to be prepared at work and at home. Many of us realized how unprepared and inexperienced we are at home in the event of an emergency. Some of us had never used a fire extinguisher, let alone use it on a real live fire!

The importance of this training is based on how seriously the individuals participate and the MoT staff came through in spades. The simulations were very high energy and exciting to take part in. Although it is serious learning, the duct taping of participants to spine boards is also lots of fun!

We had one incident during this training where someone's pants exploded (ripped open) due to his efforts to lift the "victim" on the spine board. We had to administer first aid on the rear load security with duct tape, right Fernando? ♦

Topics covered in the Emergency Response Team training include the following items:

- Personal and home preparedness
- Overview of the emergency response system, and review of emergency plans
- Roles and responsibilities of the team and individual members
- Overview of spill containment, bomb threat procedures, different types of fires and fire safety procedures
- Priority of actions
- Hazard recognition and evaluation including structural and non-structural hazards
- Critical interventions
- Search and rescue techniques and skills
- Personal protective equipment usage and limitations
- Injury and casualty management
- Peer group critical incident stress debriefing
- Incident Command System: basic training

Field Services – War Room 2008!

Submitted by Keith Callander, Director Provincial Field Services

It's that time of the year again! As seen in the photo, the Field Services Management team has been hard at it, setting out the program and allocating crew resources to tackle what is promising to be another great year of project delivery. In the background, the menagerie of sticky notes reflects various projects and crews being brought together to build and deliver an exciting 2008/09 program. Successful delivery will rely on knowledgeable Field Services personnel including ministry representatives, crew personnel, TELPs, EITs and the Field Services resident CAiCE experts (the special "blue diamond" sticky notes). Bring on the blue skies, excavators, graders, trucks and pavers. We're dedicated people... moving British Columbia forward! ♦

Tom Murphy, Gary Stewart, Tracy Wynnyk, Brian Twiname, Bob Penner, Rob Sylvester, Doug Kidd, Raj Gill and Barry Bergstrom.

Cleaning Up at the Prince George South Scale

Submitted by Nick Leatham, Commercial Transport Inspector

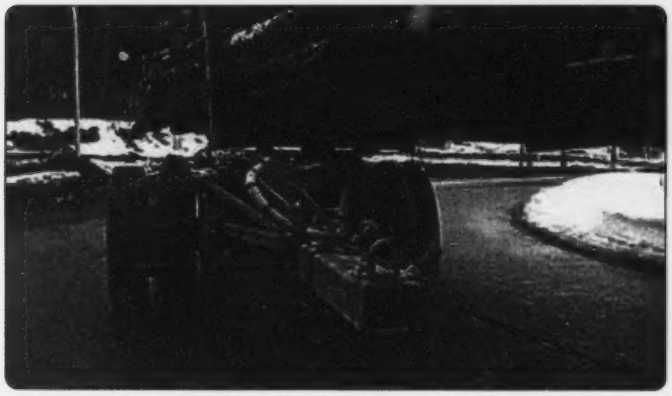
This one, my fellow inspector Glenn Winther spotted before it happened. When the truck crossed the scale Glenn noticed the angle of the reach insert was no longer straight – far from it – it was about to pull apart. He directed the driver to park the unit. As the truck was turning the corner after the scale, the reach actually pulled apart. And there she sat.

#1 The corner where the reach connecting the two units pulled apart.

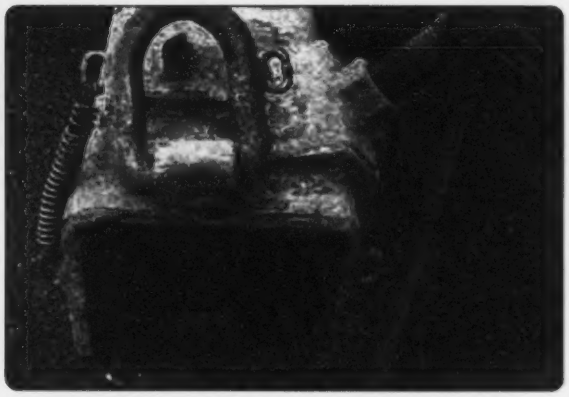
The trailer came apart because the driver had failed to secure or tighten the friction clamp on that insert. And the stoppers weren't adequate to keep the insert in. Good thing this didn't happen on the highway!

As Glenn was assessing the situation, he saw an empty self-loader logging truck passing by on the highway. Glenn waved at the truck. The self-loader turned around and came into the scale, to see if the driver would like his assistance.

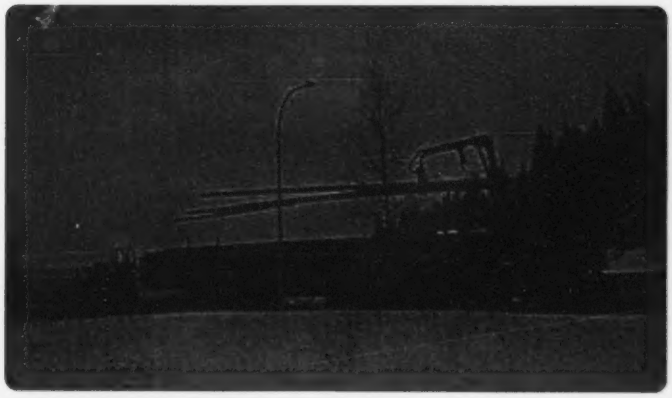
This was to our advantage, because it was all cleared away in just over an hour. The logs were transferred from the disconnected trailer, onto the self loader. Then the truck drivers were able to put the insert back into the reach and load the now empty trailer onto the truck with the help of the self loader. ♦



2 The reach has multiple inserts that are held in by friction clamps, set to a desired length of reach.



3 The little plates on the inside are meant to keep the reach insert from pulling all the way out. The two units pulled apart because the friction clamp was not done up.



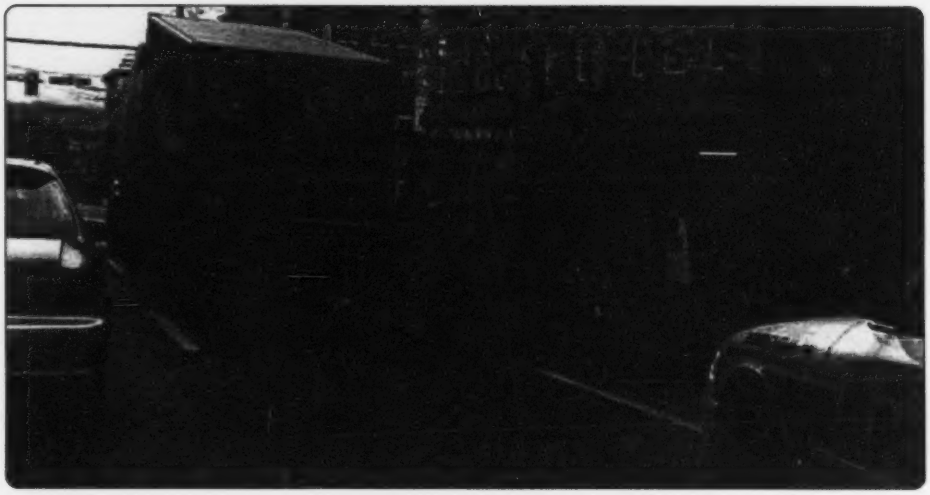
4 The first logs being loaded off the trailer and onto the empty self loader.

5 Snow falling off the logs as the light dims.

Oooops!

Submitted by Nick Leatham, Commercial Transport Inspector

This photo is from when my wife and I were in Vancouver and heading home to Prince George. This was right in Vancouver, near the west end. The trailer has pulled apart, probably due to the pin(s) being pulled to lengthen or shorten the trailer, then the driver probably drove away without engaging the pin(s) again. ♦



See Employees @ Work

Submitted by Nancy McLeod, Road Runner Editor

Ever checked out the @Work employee intranet site? If so, you may see some familiar faces and names. If not, you can find out more about some of the people you work with at **https://gww.gov.bc.ca/index.aspx**. The skills, attributes and achievements of Ministry of Transportation employees are frequently featured. Here's a list of luminaries from our ministry that I have found (apologies if I've missed anyone):

"That Thing You Do" – Short Video Profiles:

- Scott Aitken
- Paul Squires
- Sherry Eland
- Shanna Mason
- Laurie Laupitz
- Mike Hovde
- Greg Neal
- Reg Faubert
- Kim Kovacs
- Hugh Eberle
- Murray Tekano

Other Articles Feature:

- John Dyble (Executive Profile)
- Premier's Awards Winners for 2007-08 (includes 15 MoT employees)
- Keith Callander, Brian Twiname & Bob Penner (Green Ideas Shine)
- Simon Leung (Green Ideas Shine)
- Provincial Field Services (Ideas Shine)
- Murray Tekano (Premier's Award 2007)
- CVSE Premier's Award 2007 (Feature Story)
- Richard Roberts (The Best of the Best)
- Ryan Oakley (Do You Know...)

Spot the Violation

Here's the best answer we received to last issue's Spot the Violation:

"What would have led to the situation?

Coming up too fast to the red light and using the hand valve (company brakes) to stop, and the trailer stopped and the truck didn't.

The truck didn't have the safety chains done up either, maybe."

– **Nick Leatham**, Prince George South Scale

Team Keeps "Knowledgeable Owner" Torch Lit

Submitted by Ryan Oakley, Highway Design EIT

The term "Knowledgeable Owner" reflects the reality that although most of MoT's technical engineering work is delivered by out-of-house consultants, the ministry needs to maintain knowledgeable staff. This ensures we are getting a good quality product from our consultants and we know what to do with the information that they provide.

However, without doing the technical work ourselves every once in a while, we lose our ability to maintain that knowledgeable owner status. We jeopardize our ability to pass down critical knowledge to the next generation of public servants through proper mentoring and on the job hands-on training.

MoT Engineering recognizes this problem and is taking action to correct it by creating in-house engineering teams around the province. The in-house teams will take on assignments that will give us the experience needed to stay current in engineering standards and advancements.

I'd now like to introduce you to the in-house highway design team that I am working with in the Southern Interior Region in Nelson.

Matthew Hawkins has been working in the private sector for over four years and brings a wealth of knowledge in Computer Aided Drafting (CAD) software, project management and construction supervision experience. The ministry has agreed to pay for the distance education courses he needs to complete his Applied Science Technologist (AScT) certification through BCIT. That's a win-win for Matthew and the ministry.

Al Wall is an experienced ministry employee who has spent a great deal of time with the Field Services Branch. He has incredible knowledge in all aspects of highway construction and will be an invaluable team member.

I would also like to recognize Lorne Bonderoff, for his mentoring and dedicated support to the team. You may see his retirement photo in the Road Runner in the near future – but until then we're going to enjoy having him around.

Nelson's new in-house highway design team: Al Wall, Matthew Hawkins and Ryan Oakley.

Please welcome Matthew and Al to their new positions in the ministry. ♦

Hats Off To Our Graduates

Submitted by John Dowler, Associate Director Construction and Maintenance

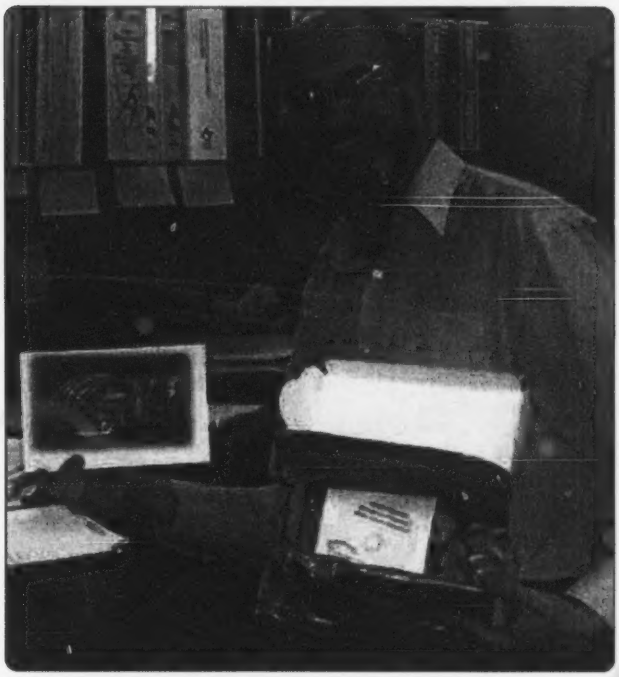
Congratulations to Mary Laing, Regional Contract Administrator in Prince George, and Veena Sundher, Corporate Contract Administrator in Victoria for graduating from the Government of B.C.'s Procurement and Contract Management Program. We are all proud of your achievement!

For Mary and Veena, their graduation represents the culmination of many months of study and quite a few late nights. The program is comprised of a series of intensive and challenging courses that are designed to provide staff with a comprehensive knowledge base in the fields of procurement management and contract administration. **Hats off to both of you!** ♦

Program graduates; Mary Laing, Regional Contract Administrator, Northern Region and a proud Veena Sundher, Corporate Contract Administrator, Construction and Maintenance Branch display their certificates. Left to right are: Rodney Chapman, Director, Construction and Maintenance Branch; Cheryl Wenezenki-Yolland, Comptroller General of B.C.; Dave Byng, Associate Deputy Minister, BC Public Service Agency; and Chris Duggan, CEO of National Education Consulting Inc.

Bound for Beijing

Earlier this month, three staff ministry staff found out that they were headed to China to work at the British Columbia Canada Pavilion in Beijing. Here's what they have to say about this remarkable opportunity.



A jubilant Pat Egan, Regional Project Manager Design, displays the box of fortune cookies and congratulations card that were presented to him.

Patrick Egan – Host Second Floor, July 15 to Sept. 20

Hello provincial comrades! I've been asked why I wanted to go to Beijing, what I am hoping to get out of it, and what made me so special. Well, let's see...

I figure as I am getting a little long in the tooth, I probably will not get to see it from space – the Great Wall that is – so I'm going to see it from the ground. Always wondered what it would be like to work overseas too! I attended the Calgary Winter Olympics, way back in '88. What a party! And the fireworks were unforgettable – imagine what the Chinese will do!

I expect I will make many new friends and learn lots about sales and Olympics! I, like us all I'm sure, am proud of this province and Canada. I plan to pass that onto the visitors at the B.C. Canada Pavilion and to our Chinese hosts. Calgary look out, here come the Whistler Winter Olympics!

Probably safe to say now that I plan to get a new camera; in fact my co-workers here in Prince George are insisting on it. Yee-haw going to Beijing!

Grant Lachmuth – Team Leader Host Services, April 16 to June 19

I have always considered myself very fortunate to work with the Ministry of Transportation and the BC public service. I have had some awesome adventures along the way, in my 31 years here. But if someone had told me six months ago that I was going to Beijing on a temporary assignment, I would have just laughed.

In my career, I've been privileged to work in some of the most beautiful areas within British Columbia – from Victoria to the Yukon border and most points in between. In my work travels, I have rappelled from helicopters, been chased by a bear, attacked by a moose and worked in some very remote and wild locations. Best of all, I have worked with some incredible people along the way and those friendships last a life-time.

Going to Beijing will undoubtedly be a career highlight for me and I am looking forward to my term there for two months from mid-April to mid-June working as a Team Leader for Host Services. I'm not exactly sure what to expect yet in Beijing... but perhaps that's what makes it even more exciting. I am also anticipating flying my wife Beth over to Beijing for two weeks during my work-term, so that we can share part of the experience together. I understand that we will have a computer workstation with internet connection at the BC Canada Pavilion and I look forward to communicating with colleagues while we are there and hope to share the experience with other ministry staff upon my return.

I can't think of too many workplaces like the BC Public Service, where staff would be afforded such an opportunity as this and I am very thankful to be able to participate.

Nancy McLeod – VIP Host, April 16 to June 19

This temporary appointment in Beijing brings together two of my long-time desires.

Since I was about 11 years old I have been fascinated with all aspects of China and Chinese culture. Going to China is on my "Life List" of things I want to do while on this earth.

My other dream has been to work in another country. I have been to about 30 countries, including solo travel in India, Nepal, Malaysia and Indonesia. While I love being a traveller and spending time with local people in exotic locales, I've wanted the experience of being more of a resident, and less of a visitor. Now I can do that, while continuing my career in the public service.

I'm looking forward to meeting many, many new people (Yes, I understand Beijing is very populated!) and to exploring what sounds like a fascinating city. I love the challenge of communicating with people, from different cultures or who speak different languages than I do. It's going to be a great test for the Mandarin I've been working on for the last year or two, and a chance to dramatically improve it. (Thank you to my co-worker, Yongmei Chen, for her patient and gentle help, as I've been trying out the tones and grammatical structures on her.)

British Columbia is a spectacular place to travel and live. In my job as a VIP Host, that will be easy for me to express! ♦

Rob Blackburn Gets a Bike Minus Sympathy

Submitted by Sherrie Applegate, Sr. Development Approvals Technician

Rob Blackburn is a home grown boy and has many ties to Smithers. That's what makes this story bittersweet. Rob and his wife are very giving people and are the first to offer up some encouragement or what have you. Rob was diagnosed with testicular cancer last October. He has undergone one surgery and is currently in round two of three rounds of chemotherapy.

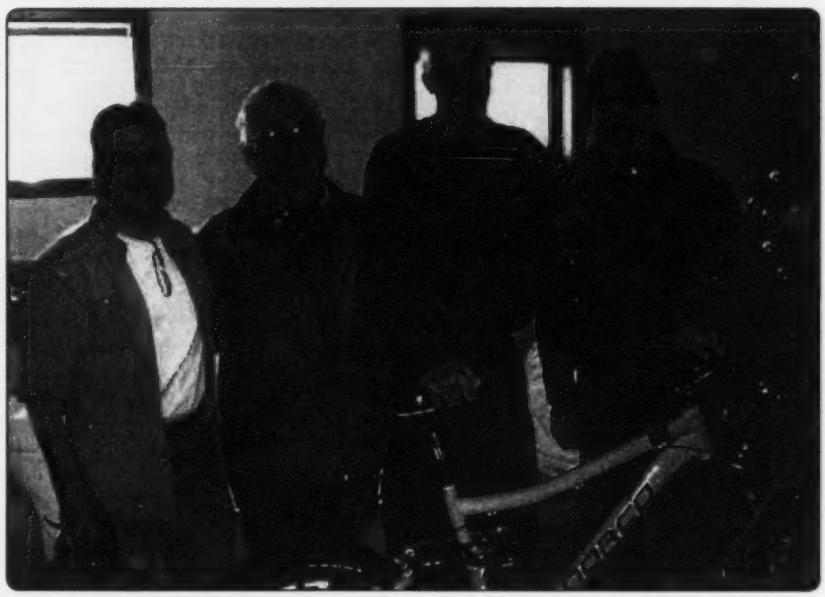
Last fall, a group of Rob's co-workers (past and present), friends and acquaintances, along with the local bike shop, conspired to give Rob an uplifting gift. A notice was distributed:

We are organizing a pedal mountain bike (Mc Bike in Smithers) for Rob Blackburn, Bridge Manager. Our goal is to have him pedal faster and further than Lance Armstrong starting real soon...this is a NO SYMPATHY GIFT.

Goal: $2,000 by Dec, 20, 2007 for a fancy road/off road bike with shocks all round and streamers on each handle grip.

Gift Delivery: by Dec. 22, 2007 to his residence, in Smithers, based on available funds.

All donations will be handled by Formula Pile and Bridge Contracting, Peter Thwaites, and all will be sent an accounting of this, along with a receipt.



President and CEO of Formula Pile and Bridge Contracting Peter Thwaites with Bridge Area Managers Rob Kaleka (Cranbrook), Rob Blackburn (Smithers) and Carl Lutz (Lower Mainland).

On Dec. 31, 2007, Rob replied:

To all those who donated and sent positive inspirations!

Thanks so much for the bike and wind trainer!

I am not sure what I have done to deserve such good friends!!

Peter Thwaites spearheaded an undercover no sympathy campaign, to raise $2,000 and buy a bike, in an attempt to help me get through my current battle with testicular cancer. In typical Peter fashion the campaign overachieved! More than $3,000 was raised and the best mountain bike and accessories I could have ever dreamed of was special delivered to my home on Dec. 21. For all of your donations and no sympathy I will be forever grateful.

I am not sure who or how many of you have been touched by cancer. For me sympathy is the very last thing I want, even in the extreme case that I don't make it. I can't say enough or put to words how grateful I am for all the donations, cards, friendship and support.

To date I have not logged any significant mileage on my new bike. I chose to use the energy I had over the Christmas holiday to take my three-year-old for a couple of runs on the ski hill, spend time with family and rest up for the upcoming rounds of chemotherapy. I will attempt to log some significant mileage in the New Year.

Even if I had the money and I was shopping for a new bike (my 20-year-old Schwinn still goes) I don't think I would have chosen anything different. My new bike is perfect! The bike is the right size, colour, etc. This bike is so light, has disc breaks, is fully shocked, and I think it's awesome!!

Today I started my second of three aggressive rounds of chemotherapy. I had prepared myself for a full on physical battle, and so far that has not materialized much at all. Instead I've learned that my cancer is an extremely tough mental game. Okay, so bring it on!

Happy new year all! I look forward to sharing my loyalties, laughs, and friendship with you all.

Special thanks to Peter Thwaites, Rob Kaleka, Carl Lutz, Jill and Peter Krause for their assistance and generosity.

Thanks to you all so much again for everything.

Sincerely

Rob Blackburn, *Living Strong*

This is an example of what the heart can do for someone who is, perhaps, not as healthy as some of us. You never know when you might be the person on the receiving end! We all wish Rob a speedy recovery! ♦

Photography From an Olympic View

Photos and Article Submitted by Jim Hegan, District Operations Assistant

The Whistler Olympic Park, located at the end of the new ministry-constructed highway into the Callaghan Valley is the site for the ski jumping, cross country and biathlon Olympic venues. These venues have been completed in advance and have been hosting a number of provincial, national and continental events, most recently the Continental Ski Jumping which included teams from 10 countries. As a volunteer for the Callaghan Valley Local Organizing Committee, I was able to gain access to restricted areas that provided prime photographic opportunities. A schedule of events, including more photographs can be viewed at **www.boldtracks.com** ♦

Photography From an Olympic View *continued from page 8*

The Heart and Stroke Big Bike Ride – Are We Up to The Challenge?

Submitted by Monique Meek, Maintenance Contracts Coordinator

Last year's HQ team, The Highwaymen, take a lively ride alongside the Parliament Buildings, while raising funds for heart and stroke research.

The Heart and Stroke Foundation's Big Bike travels the province annually, raising money for heart and stroke research. For the second year in a row, HQ is putting together a team. We're challenging other ministry offices to put a team in their community on the bike, sponsor one of the HQ riders, or come join the HQ team!

The HQ team has been named Brenda's Bikers, with the permission of Brenda Bulmer's family. We are dedicating our ride to our friend and co-worker Brenda, who passed away this year.

If you are in Victoria, or will be on June 4, at 4:45 p.m., we are looking for 29 gung-ho riders to hoot, holler and pedal throughout downtown. All you have to do to get in on this very worthy, extremely fun event is to register with Monique Meek or Bobbie Mitchell – or, new this year – directly online. Once registered, you'll need a minimum of $50 in pledges.

Want more information before jumping aboard? Interested in starting a team in your office? Visit the Big Bike Site at:
www.heartandstroke.ca/bigbike

Find out when the bike is in your community! Come and join the fun! ♦

Pennies for a Great Cause – Coins Add Up

Submitted by Nancy Merston, Marine Branch Director

Staff from headquarters emptied their pockets and raised $600 for the Jeneece and Friends Coin Drive, for Variety the Children's Charity. Thanks to all who donated and helped with the counting! ♦

Pictured from left to right: Nancy Merston, Heather Weir, Sheena Dorrell, Glen Roberts, Shawne Kirk, Kirk Rockerbie, and Shari Minchin.

Missing: Bev Propp

continues on the next page...

Highway Rollers Bowl Strikes for Tykes

Submitted by Crystal Chenier, Secretary

Strikes for Tykes is an annual fund raiser for Big Brothers and Big Sisters. It is held in Kamloops, and the money stays in Kamloops.

This was a great year for Strikes for Tykes, as 10 people bowled and an excellent charitable contribution was raised. Our total pledges for the Highway Rollers came to $1,343. The high scorer was Maurice LeFrancois with 244. Second was Ken Aura with 220. The top pledge was Crystal Chenier with $488 and second highest was Corinne Chartrand with $203. Fun was had by all. **Thanks to everyone that helped with pledges.** ♦

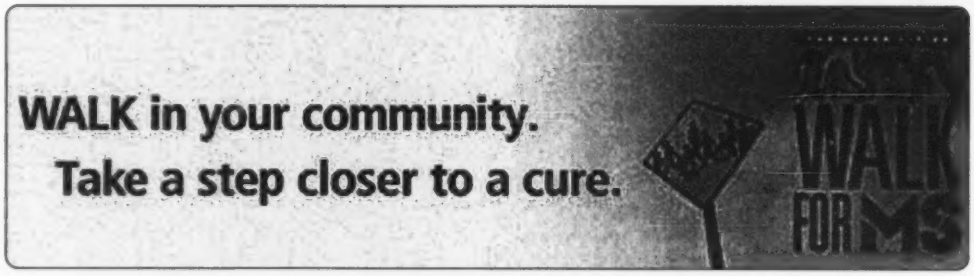
Crystal Chenier has been involved with Strikes for Tykes for seven years.

Back row: Susan Ingram, Bernadette Aura and Maurice Lefrancois.
Front row: Crystal Chenier and Corinne Chartrand.

Carolyn Turcotte, Ken Aura, Joe Amyotte, Tom Freeman, Bernadette Aura, Corinne Chartrand, Maurice LeFrancois.
Leaning forward: Susan Ingram, Crystal Chenier and Deb Luison.

Sign on for Super Cities Walk for MS

Submitted by Don Allenby, Commercial Transport Inspector



As some of you may know, my wife Kathy has Multiple Sclerosis (MS), We have a team that is involved in the MS Super Cities Walk. We have participated in the walk since 1999. This year's walk, in Kamloops, is on Sunday, April 27. I would like to invite any MoT staff that are interested, to join our team, The Spirit Walkers, or to start a team in their own community.

For non-walking types, please support us or someone from your area. The money raised goes to search for a cure and to assist people living with MS. A percentage of the funds raised stays in the community to support local programs.

Anyone interested, can pledge online, or pledge through me at work. Just visit the website at **www.SuperCitiesWalk.com.** Click on **"register, login, pledge"** and under **"Pledge a Walker"** enter Kathy Allenby or Spirit Walkers.

Support MS research, meet some new people and get some exercise! ♦

2008 Gov't/Hydro/Telus Funspiel

Submitted by Bruce Craig, Provincial Approving Officer

On February 8 and 9, the Peace District Office in Fort St. John held the 29th annual Government Funspiel. We had a dress up theme this year which was the "80s Look". The funspiel was originally a Department of Highways event back in the late 70s, and has now evolved to include provincial government, BC Hydro, Telus, municipal government employees and sponsors.

Again this year, we had 52 rinks, with a format of curling six end games while rotating positions every end. We encourage all teams to have one or two novice curlers. This enables no one to take the games too seriously.

After a day and a half of curling and bonspieling, Sunday really was a day of rest for these curling athletes.

The Yvonne Pearson (MoT) Rink captured top spot with the YRB Maintenance Contractors "A" event trophy being presented to Kevin Pearson, Yvonne Pearson, Lori Hood and Don Hood. They defeated the Donna Sipe (sponsor) rink in the "A" final, while the Cory Gardeski (sponsor) rink beat the Troy Gould (Taylor Municipality) foursome in the "B" final. The Bruce Craig (MoT) rink defeated the Kelly Kilbreath (FrontCounter BC) rink in the "C" final. In the "D" final the Art Dulaba (BC Hydro) foursome was victorious over the Brian Farwell (Ministry of Forests) rink.

A great time was had by all 208 participants thanks to the many sponsors.

Bruce Craig has organized every Peace River Government Funspiel for the last 29 years. He is now looking forward to planning next year's 30th funspiel. (While Bruce will be retired by then, he is taking on the event for one last time). ♦

"A" event winners Kevin Pearson, Yvonne Pearson (MoT), Lori Hood and Don Hood.

"C" event winners Bruce Craig (MoT), Kathy Craig, Darren Anderson (MoT) and Robyn Anderson.

These "Girls Just Want to Have Fun", dressed in their Cyndi Lauper outfits for the "80's Look" funspiel theme.

Kamloops Highway Two-Ender – Returns with Trophies and Fun

Submitted by Sue Stankievech, Project Manager

Curling is fun for everyone, as folks discovered when they attended the highly successful 2008 Highways Two-Ender event, at Kamloops Curling Club, on Feb. 2.

A new championship team was crowned: Tom Freeman, Val Kershaw, Cathy Vanlersberghe and Sheila Meiklem. The runner-up team was Kathy Strobbe, Dave Nadin, Tom Volkers and Carolyn Turcotte. With every winner there is a loser and this year's finalist recipient of the Golden Plunger Award was the team of Maurice LeFrancois, Lawrence Thalheirmer, Mike Pearson and Carol Connor.

The other fun trophies were:

- Best Presentation was awarded to Bob Pratt. When the seams on Bob's pants gave out, there was way too much presenting going on, until his wife brought him another pair of jeans!
- Fancy Footwork went to Carol Connor, who fell to the ice like a swan – a Bambi on ice.
- Skip Behind the Glass was presented to Dave Shibata who kept us on track every game.

This annual event started in 1971. There are a lot of historical names on the trophy, however only with two names signed up in 2002, we had to cancel that year. After a seven-year hiatus we finally resurrected the event this year.

Sixty-four people participated in the curling and over 50 per cent were beginners. Hopefully there were not too many sore muscles the next day! It proves that curling looks a lot easier on TV. Next year we are hoping for more teams.

I would like to acknowledge our sponsors Occupational Health and Safety, and the Social Club, who paid for the ice and the snacks. Thanks to all participants and the committee of myself, Dave Shibata, Kathy Strobbe and Tom Freeman. ♦

Left photo: Champions Tom Freeman, Sheila Meiklem, Val Kershaw and Cathy Vanlersberghe. **Upper left photo:** Carolyn Turcotte, EIT and first-time curler. **Upper right photo:** A MoTley crew of curlers. **Lower left photo:** Golden Plunger Winners Maurice LeFrancois, Carol Conner, Lawrence Thalheirmer and Mike Pearson. **Lower right photo:** Runner-up team of Carolyn Turcotte, Kathy Strobbe, Tom Volkers and Dave Nadin.

MoT Who's Who

By Debbie Derkson, District Clerk, Lower Mainland District and New Westminster

My companion Thor, who is a big burly rottweiler, keeps me healthy. We have our regular routine of going for walks and jogging. With his strength and bursts of energy "he walks" me rather than I walk him!

Jim Symington, Area Manager, Howe Sound and Squamish Sub-Office

Having joined the Ministry in 1990, I have worked in various roles in Victoria and the Lower Mainland. My most recent opportunity, as Area Manager for Howe Sound has been both challenging and very rewarding.

The team work and commitment of the operations staff and the maintenance contractors throughout the Lower Mainland District is inspiring. The job comes with the opportunity to be part of the team in-action in responding to a variety of natural events on a fairly regular basis; whether it be flooding, washouts, debris flows, rockfalls or blizzards.

At the end of the day, I can say we have a great team at all levels. And, I've seen it in action many times!

Kate Sloan, District Clerk, Lower Mainland and New Westminster

Working for the Ministry of Transportation in the Lower Mainland District is great. Every day I work reminds me of all the beautiful roads and highways we have in B.C. and how we should all appreciate the natural beauty around us.

Patrick Hill, Area Development and Operations Technician, and New Dad

The Lower Mainland District Development Approvals group has a very tired but proud dad in its ranks. On Feb. 28, Patrick Hill and his wife Jocelyn became the proud parents of a nine-pound baby boy named Colin Walter Grecia, who joins his older sister Nicola. Patrick began working in this ministry about a year ago. He is hard working, dedicated and is a valued team member in the district. Patrick and his family are very excited about the arrival of Colin. His co-workers in the Lower Mainland send congratulations to Patrick and his family on their new addition.

Shawna Heming, BA, Senior Development Technician, New Westminster

I have now been with the Ministry of Transportation for little over a year. I feel like I am finally getting my "sea legs". I feel very fortunate to have come to the ministry in a time of transition and renewal where the management is really focusing on creating great leaders. I am also very fortunate to have the opportunity to train and supervise keen and fast learners like the people from the TELP program.

Ron Danvers, Electrical Administrator, New Westminster

I have been in working for the Ministry of Transportation for 21 years, based out of Victoria. I spent 18 of my MoT years as Traffic Signal Trade Journeyman Electrician and Signal Technician keeping the signals working on South Island with the Electrical Crew.

I took Business Administration from UVic to enhance my electrical background, then moved to facilities working with the weigh scale building inventory system, planning, tenant improvements and PowerPoints.

New opportunities came along and I spent two years with South Island Saanich Area Managers with RIMS and Road Inventory.

I then jumped at the chance to put my electrical and business skills to use while still working in Saanich Area Office. I started a year ago as Electrical Administrator and my new position is based out of New Westminster. I work on the hydro billing, traffic signal load calculators and am building an inventory system for Lower Mainland Electrical Team – a great team with Dave Franklin and David Holloway.

The biggest change I have noticed over the past 21 years working for the ministry is the positive bridges and flexibility that have been built between upper management and workers, thanks to great leaders like Minister Kevin Falcon and our Regional Director Tracy Cooper.

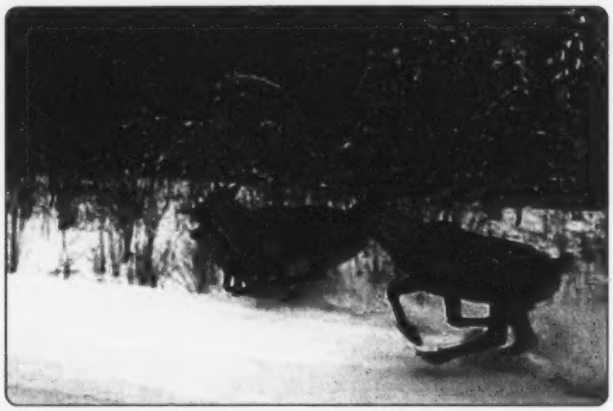
What makes this a great place to work and keeps me here besides benefits, pension and EDO days? It is that the people I work with sense that we are all seen as people first, not just employees. ♦

On the road again continues on the next page...

Wildlife Along the Liard Highway

Photos by Chris Charbonneau, District Operations Technician

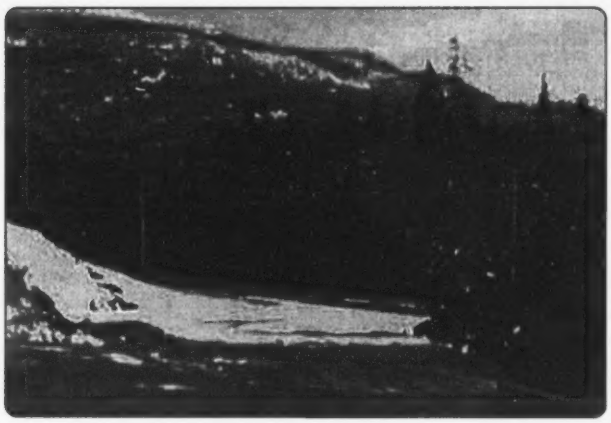
Wild buffalo braves winter in north eastern B.C.



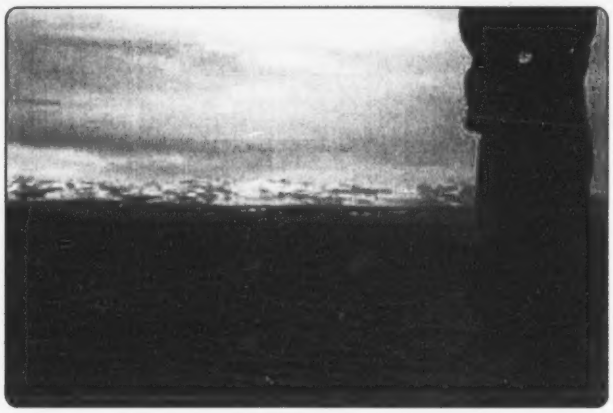
Caribou run alongside the truck, on Liard Highway 77, near the NWT border.

Sunny and Cloudy Days

Submitted by Patrick Coates, Area Development and Operations Technician



Sunny day in the Callaghan Valley, Whistler. Photo taken on new access road to Whistler Nordic Centre. ♦

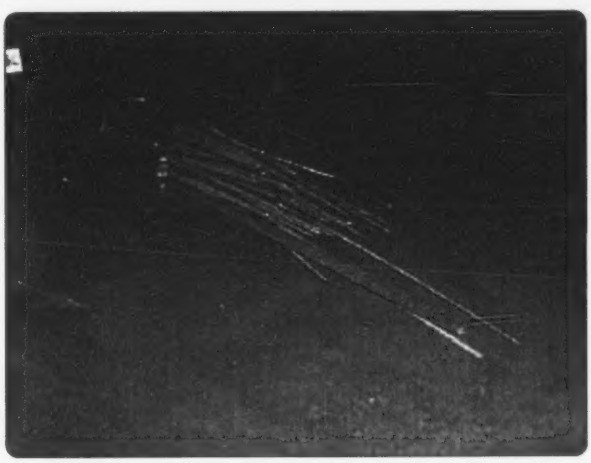


Totem pole along Sunshine Coast Highway 101, taken on a visit to Powell River. The mountains of Vancouver Island are in the distance.

Loads Come in All Sizes and Shapes

Submitted by Neal Martin, Commercial Transport Inspector

Big load - This yarder that was stopped in Chemainus gives you an idea of the size of some equipment that moves around.

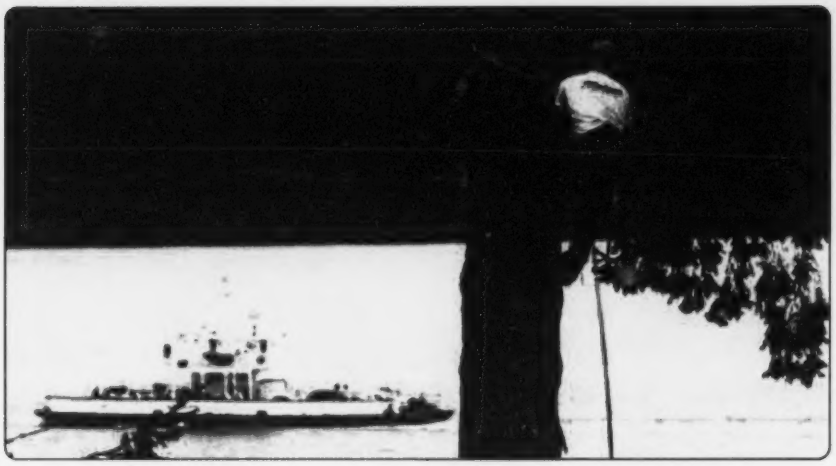


Long load - Here is a fellow who thought his truck was longer than it actually was.

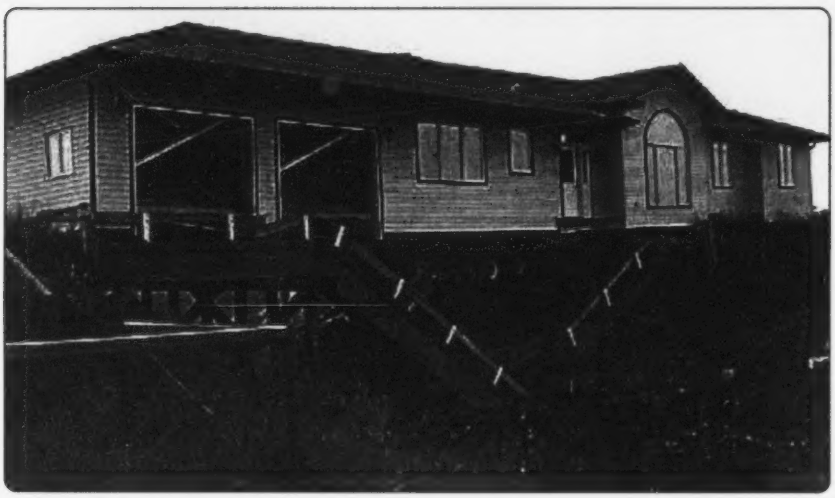
Sideways load - Here is a picture of someone who had the opposite thinking than the fellow with the lumber. ♦

You never know what you'll see! continues on the next page...

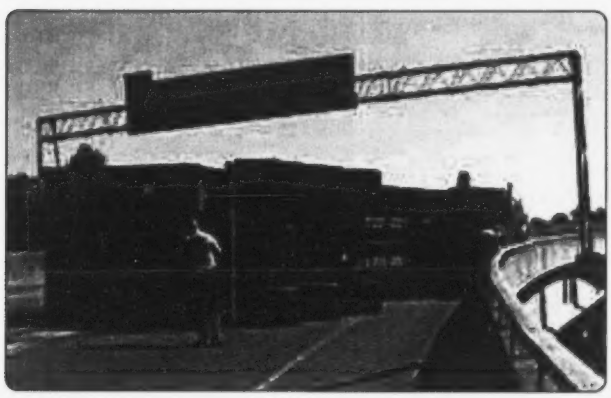
You never know what you'll see *continued from page 41*



A tree cutter is at work, in the middle of this scenic vista of the Brentwood Bay Ferry enroute to Mill Bay, on Vancouver Island. Project Coordinator Suzanne Patrick took this action shot from her balcony. ♦



"How much does a house weigh?" asks Max Walker, Area Manager, Roads. Max, who submitted this photo, has the answer: "More than a rural two-lane bridge can hold." ♦



Truck Gone Sideways

Submitted by Cliff Parker, District Services Manager

An interesting thing occurred in the Lower Mainland District – a truck rollover on West Channel Bridge. This is what can happen when going over the speed limit while driving a truck. ♦

Fort George District Staff On the Move

Kari Peterson, Development Approvals Assistant

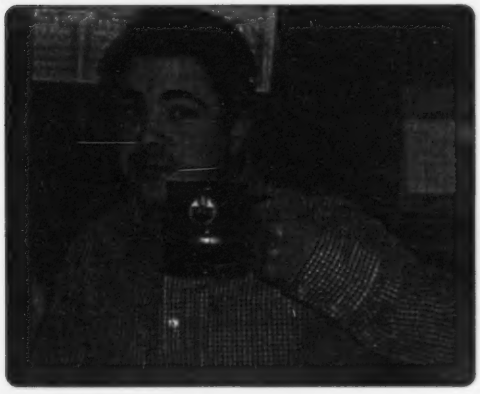
The Fort George District is hoping to move into their new office in the middle of April. They will be moving from the second floor at the Plaza 400 building to the third floor, directly above where they are currently located.

There have been many staff shuffles over the past while and we are not too sure where we left off, so if there is any duplicates, our apologies. Pat Preston, Area Manager, Bridges, retired at the end of June. Brian Taylor was the successful candidate for his position. Brian was a TELP with Bridge Engineering in the Northern Region.

Ron Schiffo, Area Manager, Roads, left the building on Feb. 29, after 37 years of service. Knowing this person, you have to wonder about his thinking of leaving on a leap year. Perhaps that way he can say he has only been retired one year for every four. Kyle Drummond was the successful candidate to take and fill the very interesting shoes of Schifty. Kyle was in the TELP program and is the youngest of three brothers who all now work for the Ministry of Transportation.

The Fort George District had a vacant senior district clerk position and decided that it was now time to fill the vacancy. Carla Cerina was the successful candidate. She brings many laughs and knowledge with her. She was temporarily working for the regional office after leaving her position with the local college.

The CVSE employees have also had some changes in this region. Jason Gillespie was the successful candidate for a position opened at the Prince George South Weigh Scales. Margo Sheehan has been transferred from Prince George to the Vanderhoof Weigh Scales. Michael Kiessling was the successful candidate for the new position of Dangerous Goods Inspector for the Prince George Area. He came to us after a number of years with the Prince George South Weigh Scales. Barry Dawson is the new supervisor of the Prince George Weigh Scales, after the retirement of George Anthony. Terry Deacon was successful for the position of Senior Area Vehicle Inspector, Prince George, following the retirement of Gordon Leatham. Val Hunsaker was the successful candidate for the vacated Area Vehicle Inspector, after serving a few years in the Prince George South Scale. Dirk Espenhain was transferred from the Tete Jaune Weigh Scales to the Prince George Weigh Scales. Gord Handlen was then the successful candidate for the Tete Jaune vacancy. ♦



New Area Manager Kyle Drummond has two brothers that work for the ministry.

Larry Rowe, Area Manager Roads

Ron Schiffo retired after 37 years of service

Submit your stories and photos:

To submit your stories and photos send your word files and photos to: RoadRunner@gov.bc.ca. To ensure the best quality possible, please email your photos as JPEGs and do not embed them in your article.

Onto new vistas

MoT Employee Retirements

Colleagues Bid Dan Saari a Fond Farewell

Submitted by Ron Danvers, Electrical Administrator

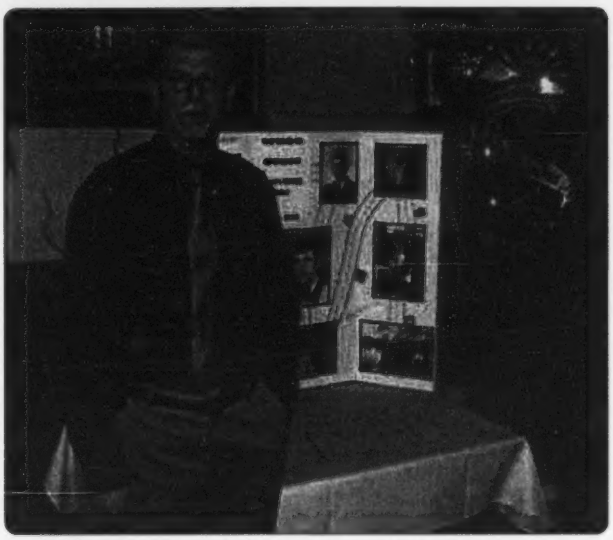
A large gathering was held at the Royal Oak Golf Club, in Victoria, on Feb. 15, where family, friends and colleagues bid Dan Saari, Area Manager, Roads at the Saanich Area Office a fond farewell after more than 34 years of service. His colleagues tried to find something to "roast" him for, but they couldn't find anything that stood out as he was such a well respected, dedicated chap.

Dan's first assignment with the Ministry was as a Design Technician on a four-man highway design team at Victoria Headquarters, producing multi-lane highway designs on Vancouver Island and in the Lower Mainland. From there Dan moved to a ministerial quality assurance role on the Vancouver Island major project.

In the early 1990s, Dan was awarded the position of Senior Consultant Liaison Technician and worked with the Project Design Engineer on the Highway 97 major project. When this assignment wound down in the mid 1990s, Dan managed the tendering of the Highway 97/3 intersection project in Osoyoos.

A two-year assignment as Project Manager of the Weigh Scale Rehabilitation Project ultimately became Dan's last contribution to Headquarters Design and Surveys Branch. Twelve years as Roads Area Manager at the Saanich Area Office, where Dan was operationally responsible for the ministry inventory south of Shawnigan Lake rounded out his diverse career in the ministry.

Dan hopes to spend more leisure time with his family including riding his tandem bicycle with his wife Marion and attending to long awaited home renovations. Enjoy your retirement Dan – you deserve it!



Dan Saari with poster tracking his career with the ministry.

Dan is a great guy to work with and organizing his retirement was a true honour.

I would like to thank Mike Proudfoot and Tracy Cooper for attending, and also Dan's sister Cathy, for all her efforts in helping me make Dan's party the success that it was.

It was a great time and Dan was very pleased. ♦

Party Planned for "Super Dave" LaBar's Retirement

Submitted by Joanne Harder, District Clerk

Dave LaBar's 35 years of experience with the Ministry of Transportation have made him eager for retirement and a prime candidate for a new career. He'll likely be recruited before he leaves us. Our "go to" guy will be sorely missed. He's the mastermind, who never forgets a name or a file number! He's the guy who always volunteers for those odd jobs that others pretend they're too busy to do.

How did he get like this?

Like many long-term employees, Dave started off in the Construction Branch in 1972, working on Hwy. 7 between Agassiz and Hope as Engineering Aide 2, making $469 per month. But being an ambitious and smart young man, he enrolled at BCIT and graduated in 1975, with a Civil and Structural Program diploma. He continued working with Construction Branch as an Engineering Aide and later as Engineering Assistant, right through to 1982, working in Port Coquitlam, Terrace, Smithers, Quesnel and Tumbler Ridge.

In 1982, he won the position of Engineering Assistant in McBride, and finally stayed put for five years, working under Rick Harrison, Frank Rizzardo and Doug Kirk. Then he moved to Quesnel in 1987, working under Al Hepp. In both positions, Dave had to be "Mr. Versatile" and do a bit of everything. The position eventually came to be called Development Approvals Technician.

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Onto new vistas *continued from page 44*

Dave LaBar is retiring in April, after 35 years of service.

Pete Puhallo and Lee Dodds welcomed Dave to Kamloops in 1990, in his new position as Deputy Approving Officer. He became Provincial Approving Officer in 2002, working with Sherry Eland, District Manager Transportation. He has been a member of the Development Approvals System Steering Committee since 1989.

Dave's clients are already claiming, "It's the end of our world as we know it!" They maintain they are serious.

Well, so are we serious, and rather sad to see Super Dave walk out the door for the last time. So we're planning a party on Friday, April 25, in Kamloops, to celebrate Dave and his wife Elaine, as they embark on a new phase of life. Dave is looking forward to more time for travel, home renovations, woodworking and devotion to their first grandchild.

We welcome you to attend this function. For information, and to forward stories and photos, please contact **Tina Kulchyski (250-828-4003) Tina.Kulchyski@gov.bc.ca** or **Joan Brickwood (250-371-3803) Joan.Brickwood@.bc** ♦

Doreen Poirier Retires After Two Decades

Submitted by Dianne Friend, Business Services

A retirement luncheon held for Doreen Poirier on Jan. 29 was well attended by her friends, family and colleagues, from nearby and afar.

Doreen was born in Calgary and lived on a farm in Dewinton, Alberta, just south of Calgary. In 1962, she married, and in 1969, she and her husband moved to Maple Ridge, B.C. and began their family business of building 41-foot. commercial fishing boats. They have two children, one granddaughter and two grandsons.

In 1983, with changes in Doreen's life, she met and married her cowboy Don. Doreen and Don live on an acreage in Maple Ridge, with their two dogs, two horses (an American Saddlebred and an Arab/Quarter horse). There is also her "rock" (a boulder in the back yard the size of a small country) which she decorated with flowers initially, then embellished with a waterfall that flows over and around the rock, and cascades into a pool of goldfish.

Doreen's working career has taken her from the boat-building business to working for the Gazette and Pacific Press before starting with the Ministry of Transportation in 1988. She began work in the construction branch but was quickly moved to assist in starting up Contract Services here in the South Coast Region. Doreen was instrumental in the re-organizing of regional Contract Services, into the province-wide department that it is now.

Doreen and Don are looking forward to having more time with the grandchildren, riding their horses and getting in some travel. Her friends and colleagues wish them a long, healthy and happy retirement. ♦

A radiant Doreen Poirier at her retirement luncheon.

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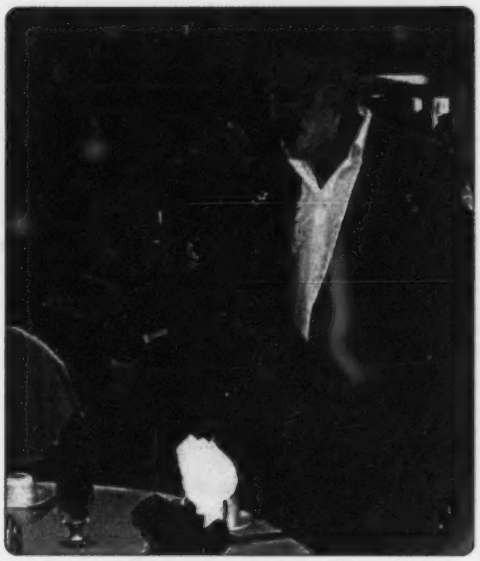
Harold Boyden Applied No-Nonsense Approach

Submitted by Kevin House, Technician Entry Level Position, Development Approvals; and Cal Fradin, District Development Technician

A memorable celebration was recently held at the Nanaimo Golf and Country Club as numerous colleagues, our newly appointed ADM Mike Proudfoot, friends and family, gathered to reminisce and bid Harold Boyden farewell as he embarks on a new chapter of his life.

Those of you who had the privilege of working with Harold probably witnessed his "alpha male" demeanour which we all acknowledge was mostly a theatrical performance for our benefit. Known for his boisterous exterior, Harold was devoted to the ministry and government for over 34 years.

His no-nonsense approach and dedication to make this a "can do" ministry are exemplified in the numerous projects that he was involved with from his early years with the paving branch and as a regional design technician to his 24 years as the District Engineering Technician in Nanaimo and Vancouver Island Districts.



Harold Boyden dispensing his wisdom.

Harold's technical talents and strong work ethic ensured projects were completed on time and on budget. His commitment to project delivery, stakeholder involvement and road maintenance programs was deeply valued by staff and the people of Vancouver Island.

All of Harold's colleagues and friends wish him a great retirement, but somehow the words "Harold" and "retirement" do not go together. He and the ministry will probably cross paths again.

Goodbye and good luck Harold – the Nanaimo Office will not be the same without you! ♦

Nick Vandermolen Always Willing to Help

Submitted by Kevin House, Technician Entry Level Position, Development Approvals and Cal Fradin, District Development Technician

On Dec. 6, co-workers and friends held a retirement luncheon to honour Nick Vandermolen.

Nick worked for the Ministry of Transportation for more than 33 years, mostly in the Development Approvals Department. Nick possessed a wealth of knowledge of his job and was always willing to share his vast expertise with his co-workers. His laid back and easy going approach ensured prompt and quick solutions to many difficult and time sensitive situations.

Nick is best known by his co-workers for his farm fresh eggs and chicken business, and his solicitations for colleagues to purchase his wares. Besides his interest in farming, Nick was also known as the office 'handy man' and many of his co-workers would approach Nick on a number of domestic issues.

The Nanaimo office and the development community will miss his willingness to help and strong abilities to work under pressure.

All the best in your new chapter of life! ♦

Nick Vandermolen's easy going approach produced quick solutions.

continues on the next page...

After 34.5 Years, Rob Howat Moves On

Submitted by Dave Edgar, Transportation Planning Engineer

Rob Howat, on his final day of work, handing over the last of his workload to successor Bob Wylie.

On March 6, the Ministry of Transportation said "So long for now!" to long-time employee, Rob Howat, at a lunch attended by some 50 friends, family and colleagues.

Rob was with the Ministry 34.5 years, starting his career as an Engineering Assistant 2. Rob's work took him to locales such as Saanich, Vernon and Penticton as he worked his way up the ladder. In 1990, he won a competition for the Provincial Approving Officer for Vancouver Island. Little did he know he'd spend 18 years in that position before deciding on this move to the private sector.

Rob is known for a number of traits including telling it like it is. As one speaker at his luncheon related, often subdivision applicants would complain that they were losing a building lot, in order to protect the environment, or add a pedestrian walkway, or for some other public good. Rob was fond of clarifying to those applicants that "You can't lose what you don't have".

Yet at the same time, Rob is credited with having invented the rubber ruler. The root of that flexibility is his sincere motivation to find the answer that allows for responsible development and yet consistently ensures protection of the public's interests. That is not an easy task, as his successor, Bob Wylie, is already learning. Rob has the ability to listen to all the voices, receive mountains of information, and from all that, discern the key issues needing to be addressed, and act in a decisive manner.

Rob has been a valuable role model for newer staff. He takes the work seriously without taking himself (or his coworkers) too seriously. His consistent, effective and impartial approach in dealing with developers and members of the public has not gone unnoticed.

Vancouver Island staff will miss Rob's depth of knowledge, his genuine concern for the public good, his willingness to lend a hand at any time, and his off beat humour (most of which we are unable to print).

The good news is: Rob is still around and soon to be appearing on the other side of the counter. ♦

Steve Uyesugi's First Smithers Home Became Site of MoT Office

Submitted by Shanna Mason, Northern Region Director

Shortly after marrying in 1976, Steve Uyesugi and his wife Margaret decided to vacation to British Columbia from Toronto, Ontario. They packed their sleeping bags and camped their way across the country. Little did Margaret know, Steve already had his sights on settling in the Town of Smithers. How fortuitous then that while camping, funds started running low and Steve decided to look for temporary work to subsidize their vacation funds. Off Steve went to the local manpower office, then one referral later and he was sent to meet with Francis Martin, Department of Highways District Tech.

The only dress clothes he owned was his posh wedding attire and he really wanted to make a good impression on her. So Steve donned his ruffled wedding best and headed down the streets of Smithers to meet with Ms Martin. He boldly entered the district office and asked to speak with Ms. Martin about a job. You can imagine his surprise when he realised that Francis was a man. Not to mention Francis' surprise when it looked like he was about to be proposed to by a complete stranger in a ruffled tuxedo. However, he must have made an impression because on August 9, 1976, Steve was hired as an auxiliary employee and became part of the survey crew even at a time when the unemployment rate was 30 per cent.

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Onto new vistas *continued from page 47*

Having a job, Steve and his wife required a place to live. The first place that they rented was located at 3726 Alfred Avenue. This site is where the Bulkely Stikine District office is currently located. (Truly meant to be!)

A few years later, John Dyble our current Deputy Minister, was a starving university student also working in the Smithers area. Steve and his wife, being hospitable on occasion, had John over for dinner and Steve spent many days cultivating our later-to-be Deputy Minister.

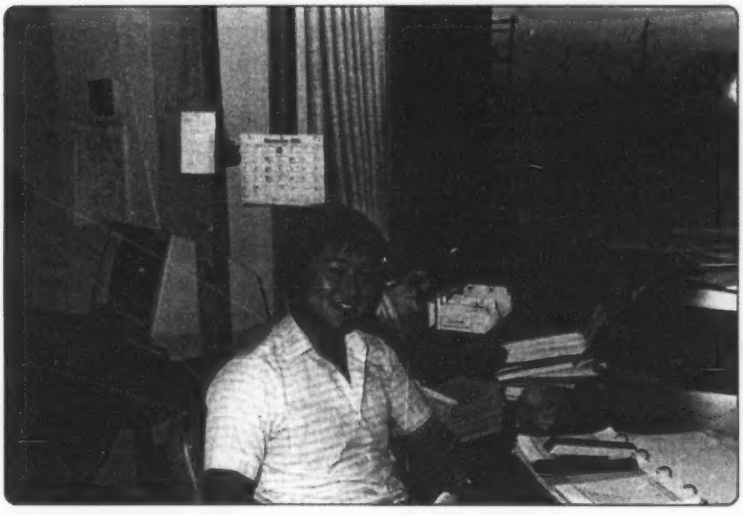
Spending his entire 32-year career in one location, yet achieving a progressive degree of advancement and responsibility makes Steve a rarity in the Ministry of Transportation. He has held the positions of Operations Coordinator, Engineering Assistant, District Technician and Operations Manager. On August 23, 2003, Steve was successful in winning the competition of District Manager, Transportation which is where he remains until his retirement.

Steve's successes include his contribution to the Francois Lake Ferry Alternative Service Delivery initiative, in August 2004. He also received the Deputy Minister's Award, in the significant project category, for his critical role in supporting the provincial government's Pine Beetle Action Plan in 2006.

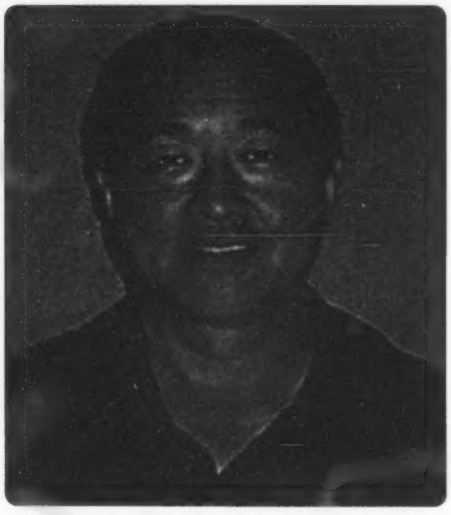
Steve and his wife have three daughters, a son and one grandchild. During his free time he enjoys fishing, golfing and yard work. Beginning on April 26, he is looking forward to spending more time with his family and renovating his house. His effective retirement date is April 25, 2008.

Congratulations Steve! Your dedication to the ministry over the past 32 years has helped build this province and contributed to making it "The Best Place on Earth."

We wish you all the best and will miss you often. Enjoy – you deserve it! ♦



Bulkley-Stikine District Manager Steve Uyesugi, back then.



Steve now, looking forward to fishing, family and home renovations.

Submit your stories and photos:

To submit your stories and photos send your word files and photos to: RoadRunner@gov.bc.ca. To ensure the best quality possible, please email your photos as JPEGs and do not embed them in your article.

Staff Roundup

Gail Henry is the new Human Resources Branch Office Manager.

Rob Sylvester is the new Manager Field Services. Rob will manage the grading crews in the lower half of the province, excluding Gateway but including the Kootenays.

Gary Stewart and **Doug Kidd** are on one-year temporary assignments with the Field Services management team. Gary is responsible for managing the grading crews in the North while Doug will manage the rehab crews through the Cariboo, South Coast and Vancouver Island.

Jean Bishop has returned to her position as RIMS Program Lead. The Acting RIMS Program Lead, **Catherine Chernoff**, is in her new position as a Business Analyst with the Information Management Branch, where she will provide services for the RIMS area.

Paula Cousins is the Southern Interior Region's Regional Manager of Corporate Services.

Joan Brickwood is now Provincial Approving Officer and was Senior District Development Technician in Kamloops. Joan has been in the property development industry for many years, both in the private sector and more recently with government.

David Marr is the Executive Director for the new Planning and Programming Branch

Robyn Cooper is a Transit Analyst with the Finance and Management Services Department, working with **Jim Hester** in the newly created Transit Branch. Robyn is assisting the research and data collection necessary to implement the projects and programs recently announced as part of the Provincial Transit Plan.

Bob Wylie is with Vancouver Island District as a Provincial Approving Officer. Bob has been with the ministry for a number of years and brings a wealth of knowledge, expertise and professionalism.

Three new staff have joined the Climate Action Program. **Ian Pilkington**, Manager of Project Delivery is developing and implementing key transportation sector initiatives and projects in support of the province's 33 per cent reduction target in green house gases by 2020. **Kevin Volk**, Manager of Strategic Planning and Policy will be developing the Transportation Climate Action Plan. **Erin Moxon** is currently completing her Masters of Civil Engineering in Project Management at the University of Calgary, and is with the team part time. In May, she will join the team full time.

Lenora Fillion is now Regional Manager, Business Services, in the Northern Region.

Tracy Houser was the successful candidate for the Saanich Project Management Technician posting.

Sue Pauwels was the successful applicant for Executive Administrative Coordinator to Highways Department ADM **Mike Proudfoot**.

Robyn Abbott is back at her base position as Administrative Assistant in the Information Management Branch. **Jennifer Melles** is on a temporary appointment with the Ministry of Small Business and Revenue as a Projects and Policy Analyst.

Robyn Abbott and Jennifer Melles are thanked for their work with Highways ADM Mike Proudfoot and wished well by their colleagues.

Photo credit: Lindsey Fanning

Henry Lew just completed a temporary appointment as Senior Transportation Planning Engineer. Currently he is helping with District Engineer duties in the Lower Mainland District.

In February, Henry and his family travelled to Cranbrook, to attend the BC Winter Games. His son, Robbie, competed against other athletes from across the province in the sport of karate. Robbie won two events, and brought home a bronze and a gold medal. Henry and his two sons started karate together as a fitness activity, about five years ago. They have all progressed to the rank of brown belt and continue to train together regularly.

Henry Lew and sons Robbie and Justin all have brown belts in karate.

BRITISH COLUMBIA
The Best Place on Earth

Ministry of Transportation

In Memoriam

Norman Robert Zapf

September 25, 1924 – February 14, 2008

Submitted by Carolyn Zapf

Norm Zapf played a major role in the location, design, and construction of B.C.'s highway system.

Norman Robert Zapf, former Executive Director, Construction Branch, died peacefully on February 14, 2008, in Vancouver, B.C. Born in Saskatchewan on September 25, 1924, Norm Zapf joined the Ministry of Transportation and Highways in British Columbia in 1950, and worked in various departments 37 years. He was appointed Director of the Location and Design Branch in 1959, Director of Construction in 1971, and Executive Director, Construction Division in 1986.

During this period, Norm Zapf played a major role in the location, design, and construction of British Columbia's highway system. He personally headed the teams for reconnaissance and selection of new routes through the mountains, regaling his family with tales of backpacking and skiing through the mountain passes. One of the many projects Norm Zapf located and designed was the section of the Trans Canada Highway from Hope to Golden, including the road through the Fraser Canyon and the Rogers Pass. And Norm was there on the summit of the Rogers Pass, in the summer of 1962, to cut the ribbon that officially opened the highway.

Later, responsible for all highway capital projects in British Columbia, Norm Zapf established new construction methods, standards and environmental guidelines as he worked on projects such as the Island Highway, on Vancouver Island, and the Coquihalla Highway. He chaired the committee of the Roads and Transportation Association of Canada (of which he was an active member) that prepared and published the first Canadian highway design standards manual. He was also a member of the B.C. Road Builders and Heavy Construction Association and the Civil and Structural Advisory Committee at Camosun College in Victoria. In 1988, the Engineering Institute of Canada awarded Norman Zapf an Honorary Membership in recognition of his significant contribution to Canadian highway design and construction.

The family of Norman Robert Zapf invite his friends and colleagues to join them at a memorial service in honour of his life and work. The service is on May 3, at 3 p.m., at First Metropolitan Church, 932 Balmoral Road, Victoria, B.C. To contact the family, write to **carolynzapf@sympatico.ca.** ♦

Brenda Doreen Bulmer

December 2, 1952 – February 19, 2008

Submitted by Elizabeth Young, Events Planning Coordinator

Brenda Bulmer was Senior Executive Assistant to Deputy Minister John Dyble

Brenda Bulmer was born and raised in Victoria. She loved rearing her sons, caring for her cats, cruising in the Caribbean with her husband Lorne, music, gardening and leading an active social life. Brenda was well known in the volunteer community serving on executive committees and spending many hours supporting a variety of charitable and sporting activities.

Brenda began working in the BC public service, in 1974, with the Ministry of Housing. She also worked with the Ministry of Education, the BC Transportation Financing Authority, Forest

Renewal BC, and finally with the Ministry of Transportation. Brenda's last job at the ministry took her to the Deputy Minister's office where she played a key role in coordinating briefings, meetings, schedules and correspondence.

Her coworkers at the ministry and across the public service will always remember Brenda as a wonderful colleague and friend, consistently there with encouragement and support. She had a passion for life, was understanding and patient, and her sense of humour was infectious. Brenda was a caring person who was there with open ears to listen and give guidance, at all times.

Brenda Bulmer is profoundly missed. ♦